

London. James Fraser, Regent Str.ᵉᵗ 1841.

RAMBLE THROUGH FRANCE,

BY

THE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

OF

"THE TIMES" NEWSPAPER.

WITH MAP.

LONDON:
JAMES FRASER, REGENT STREET.

DEDICATION.

TO THE

EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,

SOME, perhaps, may inquire why — when I might have appropriately inscribed this work to many illustrious statesmen by name — I prefer an abstract personage, such as the Editor of *The Times?* The answer is short, and to my mind satisfactory. In the latter part of the month of August last, I proposed, in the then feverish and uncertain state of our relations with France, to un-

dertake a journey to the five Military Ports of that country. I explained my plan to you; and you were at once good enough to open to me the columns of *The Times*, thus securing to such facts and observations as I might offer the immense advantage of your unrivalled circulation, and the sanction which the admission of my Letters into your columns implied. Had I knocked at the door of the Admiralty, of the Foreign Office (though a very able man now presides there), or of the Home Department, and proposed such a mission, I might have knocked in vain. Not being a Member of Parliament, ready "to vote that black is white," — not being a Traitor, prepared to sever the Empire whose settlement I had sworn to defend, — not being, in a word, either Beggar, Bully, or Quack, I was unprovided with the suitable recommendations to the present occupants of office; and,

therefore, my proposal, however useful in a national point of view, would have been treated either with ignorant apathy or supercilious disdain. *Né pagato né pregato.* To you, therefore, I addressed myself, and to your prompt decision it is in a great degree owing that these Letters have ever seen the light. For the rest, I have endeavoured faithfully and diligently to perform the task which I imposed on myself. Every thing that I have noted down has been the result of personal observation and diligent research. Unadopted by the Foreign Office, unpaid by the country, unrejected by any constituency whatever, I have not thought it right to practise literary larceny on a large scale, as some have done, or appropriating the language, sentiments, and opinions of others, to call it a report and fawningly foist it on the tables of Parliament. It is not for me to speak of the manner in which my

task has been performed—that I leave to the critics; but you will suffer me to say, that I have endeavoured to accomplish that task at least with the zeal and earnestness which have pre-eminently marked your ceaseless and unwearying efforts in behalf of the British navy. Your ability, eloquence, and masculine power of style, I can neither imitate nor approach. In other countries the exercise of these qualities would secure to you an important share in the executive government, and place at your disposal rank, office, and patronage. But while these adventitious aids would enhance your personal importance, they might diminish your public utility, and tempt you "to give up to a party what was meant for mankind." It is better—far better, to wield with a giant's strength the most stupendous organ of human intelligence that ever yet existed, than to be the tool, the slave,—ay, or the leader,

of any party, however numerous, or however respectable. Independent alike of prince, or party, or people, go on and prosper in your public course as you have hitherto done. Yours are, indeed, the gifts of a lofty intellect; but you have the rarer faculty, by a social commerce, at once easy, kind, simple, and agreeable, of bringing into play the various talents of those who come into literary or social contact with you. So much strength and so much simplicity form a combination as rare as it is estimable, and secure to the possessor at once good-will and admiration.

I remain, with regard,

SIR,

Your obliged Servant,

A TRAVELLER.

Ancona,
1*st February*, 1841.

INTRODUCTION.

The reader will scarcely need to be told that these letters were written *currente calamo*. A simple reference to the dates and the distances will at once explain that the author sacrificed much to celerity; but he is not aware, nevertheless, that he has left any thing unseen or unexplained, or that he has sacrificed accuracy to attain expedition. Many imperfections of style he might doubtless correct, had he enjoyed the advantage of a lengthened revision; but being, to use a nautical phrase, "under sailing orders," neither time nor tide will wait for him, and he is now, while penning these lines, again on the bosom of the blue waters. Aware that haste is no plea for imperfection, he had rather, however, pay the penalty of rushing into print

hastily, than that the advocates of the British navy in the Imperial Parliament should be deprived of a work which may afford them an insight into the progress made and now making by our nearest neighbour, and most formidable as well as most implacable rival.

Gulf of Genoa,
30*th January*, 1841.

CONTENTS.

HAVRE.

September 9, 1840.

Opinion of Mr. Burke as to the Actual Power and Influence of France.—Commercial Existence of the Port of Havre.—French East India Company.—Spirit of Over-trading.—Difference between Commercial Men in England and France.—Failures.—Suspension of Commercial Operations.—Number of Foreign Vessels which entered the Port within the last Two Months.—The Chantiers of Havre.—Establishments of MM. Normand and Vasse.—Havre Transatlantic Steam Company.—The Eastern Question.—Its Effect on Commerce.—Number of Vessels entering Havre from Marseilles, Cherbourg, Nantes, &c. in 1833.—Receipts of the Customs in 1839.—Convenience of the Port.—Louis XVI.—His Attention to the Navy.—Products which Havre receives from America.—Trade with Spain and the North of Europe.—Tobacco Manufactory.—Lord Granville.—Frescati's. Mesmerism.—Dr. Laurent.—French Bathing..... 3

HAVRE.

September 12, 1840.

The Transatlantic Steam Company of Havre.—English and Scotch Houses of Business.—Number of Steamers.—Population of the Town.—No Incivility to the English.—Peace or War.—Naval Promotions.—Tenders for the Marine.—Few of the Steamers realise Profit.—Rigging of Vessels.—Fine Sailing Vessels of Nantes.—Pilots of the Port of Havre.—Duke of Wellington and the Cinque Port Pilots.—Vicomtes d'Archiac and Gerard.—The Emperor of Russia.—Letter of the Mayor of Graville to the *Journal du Havre*.—Letter of the Lieut. Col. Engineer-in-Chief.—Inspection of the Coast.—Complaints against Post Office.—Wages of Engineers, Sailors, and Ship-Carpenters.—Magnetism.—Dr. Elliotson.—The Duke of Devonshire 15

CHERBOURG.

September 15, 1840, *aboard the Yacht.*

The Designation of *Ports Militaires*.—Difficulty of obtaining an Entrance.—Louis XVI.—Commencement of the Works at Cherbourg.—Description of the Port, Intrenched Camps, and Vessels on the Stocks.—Augmentation of Marine Artillery.—Extension of the *Inscription Maritime*.—Rigging of

the Calypso. — The Digue. — Incorporation of the Classes of 1836 and 1839 into the Army. — The Roadstead of Cherbourg. — The Stocks. — Vessels in a State of Preparation. — The Forges and Founderies. — Progress of the French Navy. — The Rope-Walk. — Martial Genius of the People 29

CHERBOURG.

September 17, 1840.

Activity reigning in the Port of Cherbourg. — Peace and War. — Parties for and against. — Former Exports from Cherbourg. — Trade to Chandernagore, Isle of Bourbon, &c. — Exports, Imports, and loading Trade. — Cherbourg the Hotel of the French Channel. — Annual Exports of Eggs. — Custom-house Duties. — Outlay on the Digue. — Increase in the Naval Estimates. — New Preparation of Mess Beef. — Authorities at Cherbourg. — The Maritime Prefect Admiral Martineng. — The Commissary of the Marine, M. de la Gatinerie. Rank and Authority of these Functionaries. Importation of Lead. — Ovens à la Wilkinson. — Preparations for War. — System of Manning the Navy. — Fresh Contracts for the Service. — Improvement in Agriculture. — Abbé St. Pierre. — Abbé Beauvoir 43

BREST.

September 22, 1840.

Arrival at Brest. — Atmosphere of Cherbourg. — Preparations for War. — Road from Cherbourg to Valognes. — Valognes. — Incident outside the Inn. — Hastiness and Susceptibility of the French. — Commerce opposed to War. — Granville. — Coutances. — Avranches. — Conversation with the Innkeeper there. — Character of the Normans. — Norman Fishermen. — Young Conscripts. — Rennes. — Increase of the Army. — Gend'armes. — Road from Rennes to Brest. — Character, Origin, and Costume of the Bretons. — Great Men of Brittany. — Chateaubriand. — De Béranger. — Similarity between the Breton and Gaelic Races. — Churches in Brittany. — Prohibition to Strangers to enter Dockyard. — Reasons for such Prohibition. — Arrest of an English Officer. — Conduct of the Maritime Prefect. — Two Englishmen refused Admittance 59

BREST.

September 25, 1840.

Difficulties of the English in Entering the Port of Brest. — Absence of English Consuls at Cherbourg and Brest. — Gordon Warhouse. — Difficulty of Attack on Brest. — Marine Dépôt for Wood, and its Value. — The Fortifications. — Defence of the Arsenal, and Difficulty of Retreat. — Roadstead of Brest. — Advantages of the Harbour of Brest. — The Arsenal. — M. Liaist, the Hanoverian and Prussian Consul. — Ignorance and Ill-breeding of the British Vice-Consul. — Brest one of the finest Harbours in the World. — The Diameter of the Roadstead. — Brest a Congeries of Roadsteads, Creeks, and Bays. — Difficulty to Blockade a Squadron at the Port of Brest. — Apparatus for Heating Bullets. — The Bakery of the Arsenal. — The Magasin Général.

—The Quay.—The New Ditto.—Dépôt of Cannon.—Machine for Straightening and Preparing Planks.—Filtering and Preparing of Rain Water.—The North Side of the Port of Brest.—Expertness of the French in Marine Forges.—Building of War Steamers, &c.—Vessels in the Roadstead.—Convent of the Capuchins turned into a School of Marine Artillery.—French understand Division of Labour as well as the English.—Activity in the Port among the Mechanics.—Preparations for War. 79

BREST.

September 28, 1840.

Construction of Frigates at Brest.—The Commerce de Paris.—Its Weight.—Visit to the Roads.—Courteous Behaviour of the Flag Officer and First Lieutenant.—L'Orion.—Its Neatness.—The Prince de Joinville.—Desire of the French Naval Officers for Peace.—Superiority of the Naval Service over the Military Service of France.—The great Science in the Construction of a Ship.—Officers of L'Orion.—The Abondance for the Instruction of Cabin Boys.—Their Cleanliness and Excellent State of Health.—Similar to the late Capt. Brenton's Royal Naval School.—Importance of Teaching Naval Gunnery.—Readiness of the French Sailors to rush to Arms at Call.—The Ecole Spéciale du Génie Maritime.—No Naval Institution at Brest for Aged and Disabled Sailors.—Deduction of Three per Cent out of all Pays for the Support of Infirm Sailors.—Strictness at the Dockyards as to not Admitting any Foreigner or Stranger.—Activity of the Pompiers de la Marine.—Mons. Bermout, Lieutenant de Vaisseau, Commander.—Activity in both Army and Navy at Brest.—Variable Climate and extraordinary Changes of Temperature at Brest.—Brest not a Commercial Town, but a Naval and Military Garrison.—Vice-Admiral Morsad de Galle's Fleet sailed from the Port of Brest for Ireland, December 16, 1796.—Hurricane and Loss of Three Ships, and finally Captured by the English 95

PORT LOUIS, MORBIHAN.

September 29, 1840.

Arrival at Port Louis.—Inspection of the Dockyard.—A Newly-invented Bullet by Billette.—Its complete Success 107

L'ORIENT.

September 27, 1840.

Difficulty of Writing a Correct Account of the Ports of France, and of obtaining Information.—History of L'Orient.—Port Louis.—The French East India Company.—Origin of L'Orient.—Magnificent Entrance.—Library of the Arsenal.—Length and Breadth of Port L'Orient.—Industry and Ingenuity of the French.—Pay of the French Labourers.—Cheapness of Brittany.—Shears for Masting and Dismasting.—Difference in the Number of French and English Frigates.—Improvement in French Ships.—Great Progress of the French Navy.—L'Orient a Port of Construction.—

Preparations of the Military Power.—State of the English Navy.—The Maritime Arsenal.—Commercial College at L'Orient.—Increase of Merchants' Vessels at the Port since 1830.—The Population of L'Orient.—Island of St. Michael.—New Forges.—Value of Rations in Store.—Delivery of Oak, &c. &c. for the Use of the Navy.—Superiority of L'Orient in Vessels 109

PORT LOUIS, MORBIHAN.

October 2, 1840.

State of the Weather.—Marine Artillery continuing to operate with the New-invented Bullet.—Alarm of the Fishermen on the Coast.—A Hint to England.—Sir James Graham.—The Fortress where Prince Louis Napoleon was confined 127

BREST.

October 4, 1840.

The Bagne of Brest.—Precaution for Preventing the Escape of Prisoners.—Its Cleanliness.—The Tavern for Galley-Slaves.—Severity to Galley-Slaves.—Responsibility of the Watch.—Treatment of the Slaves in Sickness.—Mortality among them.—The Word "*Forçat.*"—Men sent to the Galleys for Religious Beliefs.—Louis XIV.—Suppression of the Practice of Marking the Slaves with the Word "*Gal.*"—The Uniform of the Slaves.—No Beds allowed.—The Diet of the Slaves, and Severity of their Labour.—State of Crime in the Bagne.—The Extraordinary Ingenuity of the *Forçats* in Counterfeiting, &c.—Secret Police.—Horror of Visiting the Bagne.—Count de St. Hilaire Counterfeited.—Collet (his Character).—Contrefatto, the Sicilian Priest.—Cost of Articles for the Bagne.—Value of Labour of the Galley-Slaves.—The Marine Hospital at Brest.—Provisions in Store.—The Number of *Bâtimens Armés en Disponibilité et en Commission* at Brest.—Amount of Provisions.—The Officers on board the Vessels 129

ROCHEFORT.

October 7, 1840.

Departure from L'Orient.—Change of Climate.—The Loire.—La Roche Bernard.—Iron Bridge similar to the Chain Pier at Brighton.—Journey to Nantes.—Nantes attacked by the English.—Delivered by Anne of Brittany and Charles VIII.—Carrier and the Civil War.—Republican Marriages.—Carrier put in Accusation by the National Convention.—Extent of Nantes and Site.—The Quay.—The River, and the Vessels thereon.—Vessels sent out of Nantes.—Ideas of War.—Henry IV.'s Edict in favour of the Protestants.—Madame de Sevigné.—Duchess of Berri.—Manufactories and Distilleries of Nantes.—Indret.—Its Establishment.—Independence of France as regards Steamers.—The Foundery.—Preparations for fitting out Steamers.—Progress at Indret between 1838 and 1839.—Value of Steam Boilers.—Departure from Indret.—La

Vendée. — Arrival at La Rochelle. — Its Harbour. — The Town. — The Hôtel-de-Ville. — The Room in which Henry IV. slept. — The Trade. — Pontard de Treuilcharis. — St. Bartholomew. — Biron and Anjou. — Courage of the Inhabitants in 1572. — Louis XIII. and Richelieu. — Guiton. — Metezeau bars the Entrance to the Harbour with an immense Dyke. — Famine of the Inhabitants.—Surrender of La Rochelle. — The Protestants. — Fortified by Louis XIV. — Departure and Arrival at Rochefort. (*See next Chapter.*) 145

ROCHEFORT.

October 10, 1840.

Rochefort. — The City. — The Population. — Situation of the City. — The Harbours. — No Stranger admitted unless by Order. — Great Difficulty of obtaining Admission to the French Dockyards. — Vice-Consul of England at Brest. — Elegant Entrance to the Port. — A Saw-Mill. — The *Atelier des Tours à Métaux.* — The Sail-Loft and Sail-Makers. — The *Atelier de Sculpture.* — The Model-Room. — Barbotin. — The Bagne (not entered without an Order). — Collet (*See Letter from Brest*). — The *Forçats.* — The Beds. — Difference in the *Forçats* of L'Orient and other Galley-Slaves. — M. Hyde de Neuville. — The *Magasin Général.* — The *Chantier des Vaisseaux.* — Vessels on the Stocks. — The Cranes of the Dockyard. — Ropemaking at Rochefort. — The Anchors, Bullets, &c. — The *Magasin des Subsistances.*—Making of Biscuits.—The Founderies.—Mons. Hubert. —Preparations of Steam-Engines for Vessels of War.—Hints to England. —The Naval Hospital.—*Sœurs Hospitalières de St. Vincent de Paule.*—The Vicomte Jurien.—Maritime Artillery.—Contracts.—2° *Régiment d'Infanterie de Marine.*—Mons. Rollet.—Mons. Bernard.—Details.—The Value of Provisions.—The Amount of Provisions in Store.—The Commerce of Rochefort.—The Ship-Builders of the Town..... 159

MARSEILLES.

October 10, 1840.

The Roads and Vehicles.—Bordeaux.—The Gascon Race.—The People of Bordeaux.—The *Commis Voyageur*, his Character.— The Marseillaise. — The Maynooth Priest and French *Sous-Officier*.—Monsieur Thiers.—Monsieur Guizot.—Lord Palmerston.—Processions at Brives.—The "Chant du Départ."—Rumours of War.—Colonial Trade.—Application to the Minister of Marine for Letters of Marque.—Number of Vessels at Bordeaux.—Departure from Bordeaux for Toulouse.—Perturbed State of the Population.—Departure from Toulouse.—Arrival at Marseilles.—Introduction into Gaul of the Olive and Vine by the Inhabitants.— The Fisheries. — The Position and Commercial Relations of Marseilles.—Forms and Habitudes of the Natives. —The Religion.—Henry IV.—Louis XIV. 1660.—Foundation of the Bastile.—Plague.—The Number of Vessels which entered the Harbour in 1760.—The Number of Vessels Outward Bound same Year.—The Exportations, 1783 to 1792, and Importations.—Their Value.—The Conquest of Algiers.—Number of Vessels entered at Marseilles from 1825 to 1831.— The Population in 1832.—The Number of Vessels going out during same

Years.—The Revenue of the Customs.—Principal Inhabitants against War.—Number of Vessels belonging to the Port in 1830.—The Harbour.—The City.—The Houses.—The Climate.—The People.—The Language.—Their Dances (Ancient).—Their Fête Dieu.—Departure from Marseilles..... 175

TOULON.

October 21, 1840.

Arrival at Toulon.—The Fortifications.—The Roadstead.—Excitement in the Port.—Impressment nearly unknown in France.—Manning the French Navy.—Number of Free Workmen in the Dockyard.—Number of *Forçats*.—Number of Workmen at the Arsenal.—Distinguishing the *Forçats*.—Vessels carrying on Communication with Algiers.—Progress of the French Navy.—Sailors of Brittany, Normandy, and Picardy.—Naval Administration of France.—The Fleet at Toulon.—Pay of the French Sailors in the Merchant and Government Service.—The Souverain.—M. Bellecroix.—The Sapphir Steam-boat.—Her Power.—The Authorities.—Difficulty of Entering the Arsenal.—Refusal of Admittance to English Gentlemen.—The City of Toulon.—Its Site.—Henry IV.—Enlargement of the Town.—Louis XVI.—Convents before the Revolution.—Toulon the Seat of a Maritime Prefecture.—The Arsenal and its Extent.—Number of Free Workmen and *Forçats*.—Pay of the Galley-Slaves.—The *Corderie*, its Dimensions.—Sieges of Toulon.—Increasing of the Forts.—Port and Roadstead of Toulon.—The Population.—New Hamlets.—The Fortifications of La Malgue.—A new Arsenal.—Magazine of Timber.—The Mercantile Port.—The Disposition of the People.—The Garrison.—Mad Ravings of La Jeune France 195

TOULON.

October 25, 1840.

Department of the Var, Toulon.—The Population.—Its Military Organisation.—The Direction of *Constructions Navales*.—Works and Constructions of the Port of Toulon.—Naval School of Artillery.—Commissaire Générale of the Marine.—The Staff of the Infantry of Marine.—Principal Clerks.—The Management of the *Subsistances de la Marine*.—The *Conseil d'Amirauté*.—*Conseil des Travaux de la Marine*.—Dépôt for Naval Charts.—Admirals and Vice-Admirals.—Captains of Frigates.—Midshipmen.—The *Elèves*.—The Roadstead of Toulon.—Climate, and Absence of Tides.—The Port.—Financial Details.—The Expense of Provisions, &c., for Marine Hospital, &c.—The Total Value of Provisions, &c., in the Magazines of Toulon, &c.—Admirable Manner of keeping Accounts.—Government Clerks.—Difference in the Speed and the Price of the *Malle Poste* and Diligence.—Amount of Provisions aboard the *Bâtimens Armés*.—Value of *Apparaux Machines et Outils*.—Difference in Marine Stores between Brest and Toulon.—Masts at Toulon.—Store of Coals.—The Number of Vessels in course of Construction at L'Orient, Rochefort, and Toulon.—The Total Amount of all Materials, &c.—The Expenses of *Forçats* in all the Ports 209

TOULON.

November 10, 1840.

Arrival of the Ex-Queen Christina at Toulon.—Officers of the Line.—Brenton's *Naval History*.—Toulon inferior to Portsmouth as a Harbour, and to Spithead as an Anchorage.—The Inner Harbour of Toulon.—The Anchorage.—Battery of La Croix and Cape Brun.—Strong and Irregular Currents in Mediterranean Sea.—Superiority of Shipping.—Jean Sobieski.—Sluggishness of the Admiralty of England.—Hints for England to be in Readiness.—The Bravery and Skill of French Officers.—French flatter themselves of the Certainty of Success in the Event of War.—An Illustration: Mons. Rossignol.—Antipathy of the French towards England.—Economy of the Whigs.—Manning of the French Navy (further Particulars).—"*Génie Maritime*."—French Gunners.—Officers of the French Navy.—"*Premiers Maitres*."—The Fleet of France in Time of Peace (of what it consists).—Character of Mons. Thiers.—Mons. de Nerciat.—Mons. J. de Marolles.—Officers afloat.—Admirals, Major-Generals, Commissaries of Marine, &c.—Admiral and Major-General of Brest.—Anecdote of Sir Sidney Smith 227

BOULOGNE-SUR-MER.

December 9, 1840.

Arrival at Boulogne.—Its Cheerless State.—Guizot's Ministry.—The French galled at English Success.—Active Preparations for War.—Cavalry: Exportation of English Horses for French Service.—1814, Prince Regent's Present to Louis XVIII.—Free Trade.—Danger of the Passengers, owing to the Cargo of Horses.—State of Commerce at Boulogne.—The Feelings of the People.—Strange Medal found in Ireland Commemorative of the Conquest of England, and now exhibited at Boulogne.—Activity of the French in Fitting out Ships.—Dorset St. Loe's Opinion on the Quickness of their Operations in the Time of Charles II. 249

DUNKIRK.

December 18, 1840.

Origin of the Name Dunkirk.—Battle of the Dunes.—Cromwell and Louis XIV.—Sale of Dunkirk.—Reconstruction of the Fortifications by Vauban.—The Population.—A Second Census of the Population.—The City: its Beauty and Cleanliness.—Mons. Cordier.—Improvement of the Port, and Finishing of the Dock.—Harbour and Anchorage.—French Engineers.—The Canal and Docks.—The Quays.—Admiral Keppel and Lord Howe.—The Funeral of Napoleon.—Singing of the "Marseillaise."—Follies of the French Press.—Calumny against the English 259

ST. SERVAN.

January 2, 1841.

French Navy Establishments at Dunkirk.—Frigates formerly Built there.—Difficulty of Navigating the Channel of Dunkirk.—Corvettes, Brigs, and

Smaller Craft, now Built there.—*Bassin à Flot*, and its Sluices.—The Commercial Port.—*Fort Risban* and *Levirs*.—Jean Barthe and Count Forbin.—Ignorance of Democratical Frenchman's Opinions.—Daniel Defoe on the Port and Fortifications of Dunkirk.—Gravelines, its Town and Harbour.—Defence of the *embouchure* of the Seine.—Francis I.—St. Servan.—The Dockyard of Solidor.—The Floating Dock between St. Malo and St. Servan.—The Baron Jupinier.—Trade of the Malouins to Newfoundland.—Excellence of the Seamen on this Coast.—Records of the Admiralty of St. Malo, La Bourdonnaye, Duguay Trouin 273

BAYONNE.

January 6, 1841.

Mons. Hubert, and Progress of Boat-building in France.—Reasons for the Establishment of the *Usine* at Indret.—Mons. Gengembre.—French Skill in Naval and Military Operations.—Cost of the Establishment at Indret for the last Ten Years.—Amount of Prime Cost for the Manufacture of Six Steamers.—The *Chantier de Construction*.—Price of Wood for Ship-building.—Wages of Master-Smiths, &c.—*Ateliers des Subsistances* at Bordeaux.—Mons. Appert.—Former Ship-builders of Bordeaux.—Sandbar at the Mouth of the Adour.—Vain Attempt to remove it.—Government Magazines, &c., on the Banks of the Adour.—State of the Fortifications of Bayonne.—Opinions and Feelings of the Inhabitants of Bayonne.—The Ex-Commissary of the Marine.—M. Le Baron de la Gatinerie.—Bayonne Head-Quarters of the Twentieth Military Division.—Mr. Harvey, the English Consul..... 285

HAVRE.

Opinion of Mr. Burke as to the Actual Power and Influence of France. — Commercial Existence of the Port of Havre. — French East India Company. — Spirit of Over-trading. — Difference between Commercial Men in England and France. — Failures. — Suspension of Commercial Operations. — Number of Foreign Vessels which entered the Port within the last Two Months. — The Chantiers of Havre. — Establishments of MM. Normand and Vasse. — Havre Transatlantic Steam Company. — The Eastern Question. — Its Effect on Commerce. — Number of Vessels entering Havre from Marseilles, Cherbourg, Nantes, &c. in 1833. — Receipts of the Customs in 1839. — Convenience of the Port. — Louis XVI. — His Attention to the Navy. — Products which Havre receives from America. — Trade with Spain and the North of Europe. — Tobacco Manufactory. — Lord Granville. — Frascati's. — Mesmerism. — Dr. Laurent. — French Bathing.

September 9, 1840.

Mr. Burke, in speaking on the army estimates in 1790, says, "France, by the mere circumstance of its vicinity, had been, and in a degree always must be, an object of our vigilance, either with regard to her actual power, or to her in-

or unwilling to assist you longer. In a commercial country like England, and in such towns as London, Liverpool, and Bristol, such a situation as this will be appreciated; but the inhabitant of London, Bristol, or Liverpool, can, arguing from the experience of those places, form no idea of the effect which such a state of things produces here. In England there are large masses of floating capital, and immediate returns are not looked for. In England, too, there is a reservedness, a discretion, a secrecy, and a *retenue* in commercial operations, to which, perhaps, great part of their success is owing; but here, where capitals are small, where masses of money are not found at all, where immediate and large returns are almost instantly looked for, where the national character is vehement, demonstrative, and prone to the indiscreet exhibition of any private calamity, it were impossible to conceive the effect produced by the vivid manner in which these worthy, but somewhat too vivacious, Normans speak and think of the actual crisis. As to the future, I never enter with them into the consideration of it, for their

> "Active fancies
> Travel beyond sense, and picture things unseen."

In sober reality, it is really lamentable to think that the mere rumour of war, which every sane

person dreads and deprecates, should produce such results. They, however, who have raised the storm have much to answer for in all the French seaports, but most of all here. There have already been three or four failures, one a banker; discounts are now impossible to procure, even on good paper. Many vessels, which were freighted for St. Thomas's and Hayti, for Mexico, Colombia, and the Brazils, for Chandernagor, Martinique, and Guadaloupe, have unladen their cargoes, and have either proceeded out in ballast, or have gone into dock, there to lie up till something definitive is settled. In the year 1837, the number of foreign vessels which entered this port was above 800, making, in round numbers, an average of 66 a-month. During the two last months, however, owing to the causes which I have stated, I am informed by an eminent ship-broker that only 96 foreign vessels have entered, leaving a deficit of 36 even on the estimate of 1837.

It is most likely that this defalcation would be speedily repaired, the moment all sinister auguries of war had ceased to resound; but in the meantime, workmen are thrown out of employ, enterprises of great moment stand still, the fair occasion for speculation goes by, hundreds of artificers are without bread,—they become impatient, uneasy, riotous, and the original rumour—the prelude

to this "*ingens diraque cohors malorum*"—is found, after all, to be destitute of truth and verisimilitude. What reason had Chancellor Oxenstiern to say, "With how little wisdom is the world governed!" Eighteen months ago the two private *chantiers*, or dockyards, of this town employed 180 workmen, including machinists, ship-carpenters, calkers, &c. I yesterday visited both these establishments, the one the property of M. Normand, and the other of M. Vasse; in the latter, there was not a single ship-carpenter employed, though there were two common sawyers at work; in the former, there was one master ship-carpenter, but neither calkers, riggers, smiths, nor machinists. Normand has acquired some celebrity as a builder by the construction of those beautiful and swift-sailing boats, the Castor and Pollux, which plied last year between London and St. Valery-sur-Somme, but which are now laid up literally rotting in the Basin Napoleon. He also constructed the Phenix, which plies between London and Havre; the Havre, which plies to Rotterdam; and the Hambourg, which trades to Hamburg, and various other smaller vessels equally distinguished for beauty of form and rapidity of sailing. Normand was also to have constructed the great Transatlantic steamer from this port to New York; for the Havre merchants and tradesmen, finding the speed and suc-

cess of the Great Western, British Queen, &c., materially injured the liners* frequenting this port, had also determined to have their steamer too. A company had been formed, shares were issued, and every thing was in fair progress towards the end of June, when the speculators, in consequence of this plaguy Eastern question, became timorous, and the enterprise vanishes, or at least is abandoned for a season. Yesterday it was known here that this conception of the Havre men is actually executing, at the moment I write, in Belgium. The Belgians are to have one half of the shares, the Americans the other half, and one of the vessels is to be constructed at Antwerp. I was present at a sale of 660 bales of cotton at the Bourse when this news was bruited abroad, and I assure you it were difficult to form an idea of the exasperation it caused. Far am I from blaming the merchants for feeling sorely on this point. I have conversed with most of the leading men amongst them, and they all (with one solitary exception) admit that a war would be ruinous to France and disastrous to Havre. Desirous, therefore, of peace, for reasons not only resulting from public policy, but from the strongest suggestions of private interest, they complain that they are

* The sailing-packets to New York are so designated.

the victims of reports and rumours which they do not encourage, whose existence they lament, and whose propagation they would, had they the power, check and control.

There are about 240 vessels, some large, some small, belonging to this port; but more than 500 French vessels from Marseilles, Cherbourg, Nantes, Bordeaux, Bayonne, &c., entered here in 1833. I have not been able to get an accurate account of the number of French vessels which entered here in the past year, but I am told by those competent to give an opinion, that the number was on the increase, and that it is not likely there will be any sensible diminution in the present year. The receipts of the customs last year were above 30,000,000 of francs, but there is reason to fear that there will be a sensible diminution in the present year. All nautical men agree that the port is a most convenient one, both for getting into and going out, for by means of the play of artificial sluices sufficient water is provided for the entry of the largest vessel two hours before the full flow of the tide and two hours after the ebb. This remarkable advantage is in no degree owing to the nature of the place; it is altogether the result of art, and is chiefly due to the encouragement given by the unfortunate Louis XVI. to every project of this kind in

1786.* In speaking of Cherbourg, I shall have to enter more at length on this subject, and shall, therefore, abandon it for the present; but in justice to the memory of that unfortunate prince, I must remark, that he was not only the creator of the port of Cherbourg, but that he further merits the renown of having done more for Havre than any of his predecessors.

The chief products which Havre receives from America are coffee, indigo, hides, peltry, and last and most of all, cotton. A great deal of this latter article is manufactured at Rouen, and a considerable quantity at Mulhausen. Considerable exports of American productions, or perhaps I should rather say transhipments, are made to Dantzic, Hamburg, and St. Petersburg.

The chief trade with Spain is confined to Alicant, Carthagena, Cadiz, and Malaga. Thence are received the Spanish wines, wools, oils, and barillas. The traffic with Portugal is inconsiderable; but hitherto a considerable commerce has existed between this port and Sweden and Norway, in planks, deals, masts, pitch, tar, &c. This trade, however, has much declined within the last twelve months, and has nearly ceased

* For a fuller account of these projects see *Histoire de France pendant le 18ème Siècle, par Charles Lacretelle*, tom. iii. p. 97.

during the last two. I have already stated, that there is nothing building in the way of ships. Some of the artificers remain here, others are gone of their own free will to Honfleur, while levies have been made of the most able artificers for the government dockyards.

Though Havre is not properly a government port, or does not, in other words, contain a government dockyard or arsenal, yet it is the residence of a commissary-general of the marine; and it possesses a commercial college and a public library. It can boast of no manufactures, except the tobacco manufactory of the government, and some small establishments for the manufacturing of cables, cordage, and tar.

I have left myself little space for general news. Lord Granville has been here for the last three weeks at the establishment called "Frascati's." I believe he intends remaining until the first weeks of October. He moves out but little, seldom appearing before three o'clock in the day. His Grace of Devonshire has been here for more than a month, and lives at the same hotel. There is to be an exhibition of the disgusting mummery of Mesmerism in the saloon of this establishment (I mean at Frascati's) this evening at eight o'clock, by a Dr. Laurent. I mean, as the French say, "to assist" at it, and, should any thing queer take place, shall acquaint you.

I have no doubt there will be a crowd, and much enthusiasm; for whatever these excellent Gauls take up they take up vehemently and with passion, which, by the way, is a far more expressive term in French than in English. They have few hobbies, it is true, not half so many as dear honest John; but when they do take up one, they straightway and stark ride the animal to the death. I am old enough, I am sorry to say, to remember when nobody bathed in France. Now the Gauls, as the late Lord Louth used to pronounce it, are the "*say bad-inest*" people in all Christendom. It were ludicrous, *if not something worse*, to see huge hairy fellows in caftans and calimancoes, of vigorous thews and brawny sinews, called "*guides*," seizing on the slimmest as well as the most Dutch-built damsels, by the tapering waist or the ample hip, carrying them, ducking them thrice, then seizing their hands or arms, and dancing all sorts of capers, sometimes for half, but always for a quarter of an hour. Where "virtue is" these practices may, with such sea-monsters, be "most virtuous." But as I am myself of the earth, earthy, and believe all flesh to be weak, I confess I had rather my wife, daughter, or sister, avoided this close contact and frequent pressing.

HAVRE.

The Transatlantic Steam Company of Havre.—English and Scotch Houses of Business. — Number of Steamers. — Population of the Town. — No Incivility to the English. — Peace or War. — Naval Promotions. — Tenders for the Marine. — Few of the Steamers realise Profit. — Rigging of Vessels.—Fine Sailing Vessels of Nantes.—Pilots of the Port of Havre.—Duke of Wellington and the Cinque Port Pilots.—Vicomtes d'Archiac and Gerard. — The Emperor of Russia. — Letter of the Mayor of Graville to the *Journal du Havre*. — Letter of the Lieut. Col. Engineer-in-Chief. — Inspection of the Coast. — Complaints against Post Office. — Wages of Engineers, Sailors, and Ship-Carpenters.—Magnetism. — Dr. Elliotson. — The Duke of Devonshire.

September 12, 1840.

My letter of the 9th inst. will have informed you of the disappointment and surprise with which the news of the formation of a Transatlantic Steam Company at Antwerp was received in this port. I had scarcely despatched my communication by the Phenix, when I learned that notwithstanding the disposition which evidently exists not to embark in any hazardous enterprise at this moment, it was nevertheless resolved, at every risk, to go on with the specu-

lation commenced under the name of the Havre Transatlantic Steam Company; and that the English capitalists who are shareholders in the company, with that good sense and energy which generally distinguish them, determined, in conjunction with some spirited Frenchmen, that it was a question of "now or never," the more especially if Belgium were allowed to have the start in the race of competition. Imbued with this conviction, it was determined that a deputation should immediately start for Paris; and, accordingly, on Thursday last, Mr. Charles Guillon, accompanied by the celebrated ship-builder Normand, to whom the construction of the vessel is to be confided, set out for the capital. They were accompanied by M. E. Dubois, the notary of the Company, and the objects of the deputation were immediately to put the affair into working order, so as to commence instantly the building of the vessels. It will also, of course, be a part of the duty of this deputation to confer with the Baron Tupinier, whom the government has nominated chairman of the commission appointed to inquire into, and finally arrange, the conditions under which the project shall be put in action.

I seize on this fact, unimportant in itself (unless to those interested as shareholders), as affording a renewed proof of the desire of the intelligence and wealth of this town for the main-

tenance of that peace which I trust and believe will not be interrupted. You will not fail to remark that three-fourths of the capital to be embarked in this enterprise will be found to be English and American, and the remaining fourth French. So that speculations of this nature have an inevitable and necessary tendency to increase and strengthen those friendly dispositions generated by a quarter of a century of unrestricted intercourse between the two nations.

I should also observe, that several of the most respectable commercial houses here are English, Scotch, American, and Irish, some of them having French and American junior partners; and, so far as my observation extends, there is not a man among the number who would not rather lose his right arm than see the good understanding which has for ten years prevailed between the two countries suddenly interrupted. On a moderate computation there are not less than forty-six French steamers, large and small, belonging to this port, and if any interruption were to take place in our friendly relations, whence, I ask, are these and the other steamers of France to be supplied with coal? Rest assured the men of sense and the men of substance see and know full well their own interest, and that, as far as in them lies, they will make every effort that the general peace shall be preserved. The population of

Havre, not comprising the suburbs, amounts to somewhere about 35,000 souls, of whom 10,000 are foreigners, chiefly American and English. I do not say, by any means, that the lower classes among them are models of sobriety and decorum; but this I do say, that having been among them at all hours, both by night and by day, whether they were under the influence of wine and other strong drinks, or whether they were working in sober sadness, I never heard from the lips of the lowest *chiffonnier* amongst them a word discourteous or disparaging to the English. I think it necessary to say thus much at a time when much and mischievous pains are taken, both in England and France, to exacerbate in England that national animosity which was slumbering, if not altogether dead, and to appeal in France to that childish empty vanity, that "echo of folly and shadow of renown," which is roused in this country — this *plaisant pays de France*, as Mary Stuart called it — almost by beat of drum.

The question of war and peace is, however, not a "one-sided" question. If the French would lose our coals, our lead, our iron, our Guinness's porter (of which a vast deal, by the way, is now consumed all over France), we in our turn would be deprived of all the vintages of the Rhone, of the Cote d'Or, and last and best of all the Garonne, of the *Chasselas* of Fontainbleau,

and of that vast variety of cheeses which the *gourmands* and *gourmets* of London—next to the Dutch, the most cheese-eating people in the world—so much relish. Pardon me for descending to "such small deer," but there are men—ay, and in high stations too—who, insensible to higher and better considerations, would yield to arguments such as these.

I repeat, that the opinion of the best-informed people is, that we shall have no war, and I know by letters received this morning from Nantes and all along the coast of Brittany, that the same opinions prevail there. Nevertheless, in the floating state of uncertainty in which we live—in the oscillations between peace and war—all business is at a stand-still, and at Nantes, as well as here, shipowners cease to freight their vessels; nor are insurance companies very willing to take risks. But Frenchmen, otherwise brave even to rashness, are in commercial speculations timid and timorous to a fault. It is my duty, however, to deal with facts, not with speculations and opinions; and I think it right to inform you that considerable levies for the military marine, or, in other words, for the government ships, have been made in Brittany, and that some of the Nantes merchants, bolder than the rest, who are disposed to freight their vessels, find it difficult to obtain crews.

It would be jumping to a conclusion to argue hence that the nation is intent on war. All I would infer is, that the French government wishes to be prepared in case of need, and wo to the government that does not! Of one thing, however, rest assured, that whatever efforts may be made by the Admiralty scribes to keep the people of England in the dark, the readers of *The Times* shall at least know what is doing in the ports of France. In a spirit of fairness, I ought to mention that no levies of any amount have been made here, and none at all either at St. Malo or St. Servan, where there are 4000 sailors at least, including ships' carpenters.

On the other hand, I ought to mention that some naval promotions have taken place in this place, and that on Tuesday next the Commissary of the Marine will receive tenders for the following articles for the use of the navy:—7000 kilogrammes of Dutch cheese; 3000 kilogrammes of Carolina rice; 6000 kilogrammes of Haytian coffee; 6000 kilogrammes of Bourbon sugar. It is a part of the conditions that these articles shall be delivered in a very brief interval. I should also mention to you, that large orders for navy pork are now executing at Morlaix, and for salted butter at Rennes. Of about forty-six steamers belonging to this port and that of Hon-

fleur, I am informed that there are not above half-a-dozen among them realising profits; so that, in the event of war, it may be presumed that thirty at the least could easily be placed at the disposal of the government. I give you the names of the most considerable among them:— The Havre, the Amsterdam, the Hamburg, the Morlaisien, the Gironde, the Normandie, &c. These vessels, in beauty of form and rigging, resemble those of Bordeaux, and I must say, are kept wonderfully clean; so clean, indeed, that one who has been accustomed to the French ports in the Mediterranean would almost doubt that these vessels belonged to the same flag, or to the same nation. I need not tell you, that twenty years ago Nantes was renowned for sending out the quickest sailing vessels; but since the more general introduction of steam, I believe Havre must bear off the bell. There would, I conceive, if war was declared to-morrow, be no want of vessels, whether steam or otherwise; but, as an old and candid *lieutenant en pied* remarked to me to-day, "*Ce ne sont point en général les vaisseaux qui manquent ce sont les bons marins pour les monter.*" The question, however, of whether good sailors are to be had in sufficient quantity, and if so, whether they would be found adroit in manœuvring steam-boats, is too large to enter on incidentally. At a future and no distant

period I shall discuss it, giving you, not only the results of my own observation, but the experience of others far more qualified to judge. I may, however, remark, *en passant*, that within the last ten years immense progress has been made in the naval education of the French. I remember well the time when the sight and smoke of a steamer used to scare away a French sailor, but now they manage these matters far better, and skippers, sailors, and helmsmen, give and execute their orders, if not with neatness and precision, at least without that thundering shout and split-ear scream which was so insufferably detestable in the olden time.

The pilots, too, of this and other ports, are younger and more intelligent than they used to be; and this service, so necessary to the navy and commerce, receives and deserves in the division of *pilote hauturier*, or sea pilot, *pilote cotier*, or coasting pilot, *pilote pratique*, or harbour or river pilot, every encouragement from the government. Instead of screwing down these poor fellows to the last farthing, as our Board of Trade wanted to do with the Deal and Dover men; instead of taking the bread out of their mouths, and depriving of them of subsistence, they are rewarded on every occasion on which their services merit distinction, both by the government and the merchants. When I mentioned the substance

of the correspondence between the Duke of Wellington, as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and the Lords of the Treasury, concerning the Cinque Port pilots, neither naval nor commercial men here would credit the fact. "Why, your government must be mad," said an American captain, who was present at the conversation. "In addition to his other claims on his country, that great and sagacious-minded man must now be called the sailor's as well as the soldier's friend."

The Amsterdam steamer arrived here from St. Petersburg yesterday, which capital she left on the 2d of the present month. Among the passengers were the Vicomte d'Archiac and the Vicomte Gerard, the son of the Marshal. These gentlemen are attached to the French mission in Persia, and travelled overland to St. Petersburg. The first thing the young Gerard learned on his arrival here was the successful stratagetic movement of his father two days before. In the afternoon both these gentlemen started for Paris. I had an opportunity of conversing with both of them for a few moments. Gerard is a fine, frank young fellow, of about five-and-twenty. He gives a deplorable account of the state of Persia. His companion is more silent and reserved. I believe the Emperor of Russia treated the young Gerard with some consideration, and abstained from the standing Imperial joke, *Comment se va*

t'il, citoyen Francais? in which he is wont to indulge towards all Frenchmen, great and little.

The general opinion at St. Petersburg was that peace would not be interrupted. Two *attachés* of the French Legation at Ispahan had taken the route by Syria, in which they experienced great difficulties.

The *Journal du Havre* of this day publishes a letter addressed to the editor of that paper, by M. Eyries, mayor of Graville l'Heure, enclosing a communication made to the mayor by the Lieutenant-Colonel Engineer-in-Chief, A. Dupont, to the effect that from the 10th of September the Director of Fortifications had announced to the Prefect of the Lower Seine, that all buildings constructed within certain military zones would, if necessary, be pulled down, in conformity with the 37th article of the royal ordinance of August 1, 1821, in order to the better defence of any military or naval position. In accordance with this notification, I perceived to-day that workmen are engaged in repairing the draw-bridges and in deepening the *fosse*. Add to this, that all the points on the coast are now undergoing inspection. I will not hence conclude that Havre is about to be put in a state of defence; but I think, under existing circumstances, these precautions evince a seasonable and proper vigilance. England,

without exhibiting either jealousy or alarm, should be vigilant too. The legal maxim may well be applied to military and naval operations — *Vigilantibus non dormientibus subvenit lex.* From these facts the readers of *The Times* will draw their own conclusions. I do not pretend to draw either inferences or deductions. I merely relate facts.

The merchants of this town are loud in their complaints against the post-office. It appears from one statement published by the organ of the merchants, that the bag containing the letters from the departments and maritime towns, as well as from Havre, for New York, was, by some neglect of the post-office authorities, not put on board in proper time, and that the consequence was, it was left behind. It was only two hours after the departure of the Grand Turk that this mistake was discovered. It appears that this steamer receives nothing for the carriage of this mail-bag, though the post-office has a profit of 60 centimes on each letter, and, therefore, insists that all letters shall go through their hands. Under these circumstances, the merchants contend that, *coute qui coute*, the post ought to have forwarded these letters by special express. The post, however, declined this alternative, and last night (Friday) the merchants determined to send off a special express, so as to be in time for the

Great Western at Bristol this afternoon. The post-office authorities allege, that the Grand Turk started two hours before the time advertised; but the merchants rejoin, "As we knew that, and sent our letters in good season, so you should have put them aboard."

Though I have spoken of the steamers of this port, I have not given you any details as to the wages of captains and seamen. The former receive from 150f. to 200f. a month, with a premium of five per cent on the cargo, together with wine and a table; and the latter from 50f. to 55f. a month. Engineers receive from 300f. to 400f. per month; stokers from 200f. to 250f. American sailors in this port easily obtain 15 dollars per month, equivalent to about 3 guineas of our money. All this you will perceive is better pay, considering the relative prices of England and France, than is obtained by "poor Jack" at home. Ship-carpenters gain 4f., 5f., 8f., and 10f. per day, according to their merit; but, on the other hand, house-rent is very dear in this part of Normandy, and so are provisions. Ordinary carpenters, and the common run of artificers ordinarily earn about 3f. daily, or 18f. per week.

The first *Soirée Scientifique de Magnetisme Animal* of a Dr. Laurent was given on Wednesday night. The room was crowded with specta-

tors, and I should think the charlatan must have at least pocketed 20*l.* on the occasion clear profit. The audience were for the most part incredulous at first, and a French surgeon combated the propositions of the mountebank successfully enough for a short time; but as Laurent was the younger, the more voluble, and the more audacious, he achieved at length a victory by the united force of tongue and lungs. A young English doctor then entered the lists against him, but he was so little of a Frenchman that he could not explain that the pulse of one of the magnetised patients was 84!

En revanche Laurent called from the middle of the room a still younger Englishman, who had followed his course at Rouen, with moustachios and flowing hair, who vouched that the doctor had made a paralytic subject walk.

Finally, the *soirée* was terminated by the following dramatic scene, which I take literally from the programme:—

"La somnambule présentera des fleurs aux dames, quelque soit la place qu'elles occupent.

"Une personne de l'auditoire sera transformée en miroir magnétique et la somnambule se mirera dedans en faisant sa toilette.

"La soirée sera terminée par un sujet dansant la Polichinelle au son du violin et parfaitement en mesure, par l'énergique volonté du magnetiseur."

People at length walked out, thinking a great part of what they had seen mere quackery, but very much wondering at the remainder, which appeared to them inexplicable.

A propos of magnetisers, Dr. Elliotson * arrived here yesterday, on his way to Paris.

The Duke of Devonshire leaves this, I believe, in the beginning or middle of next week.

* Far am I from instituting any comparison between this able and accomplished physician and the Gallic mountebank. Having been under the care of Dr. E. for more than six months, I am in a condition to speak of his skill, science, and rare professional attainments.

CHERBOURG.

The Designation of *Ports Militaires.*—Difficulty of obtaining an Entrance.—Louis XVI.—Commencement of the Works at Cherbourg.—Description of the Port, Intrenched Camp, and Vessels on the Stocks.—Augmentation of Marine Artillery.—Extension of the *Inscription Maritime.*—Rigging of the Calypso.—The Digue.—Incorporation of the Classes of 1836 and 1839 into the Army.—The Roadstead of Cherbourg.—The Stocks.—Vessels in a state of Preparation.—The Forges and Founderies.—Progress of the French Navy.—The Rope-walk.—Martial Genius of the People.

Sept. 15, 1840, *aboard the Yacht.*

I HAVE been between Courseule and this place for two days, and landed at Cherbourg yesterday. In passing Fecamp, I had, of course, heard various rumours of the preparations going on in this town; but, deeming them to be in great part exaggerated, I gave not to them that heed and attention which the importance of the subject and the reality of the facts merited. You have doubtless heard from your correspondent in the capital of the general orders despatched from the seat of government to fortify the whole of the

coast; and I can assure you, from actual inspection, that, as far as relates to the north and north-west of France, these orders are being executed with a promptitude, a perseverance, and a vigour, which I little expected. That profound and philosophic statesman, Burke, in his "Thoughts on a Regicide Peace," observes, that if the French be remarkable for one thing more than another, it is for the intensity of their application when they have a great purpose in view; and never did I see more occasion to testify to the truth of this remark, than from what has come under my own observation since my arrival in this. "*La France n'est qu'un soldat*," says Chateaubriand, in one of those felicitous bursts, of which the truth is not greater than the eloquence; and certainly the man the most disposed to question this proposition of the poet and orator, would have admitted its truth and applicability yesterday, had he witnessed, as I did, the operations going on in the Port Militaire.

You are aware that the designation *ports militaires* is applicable only to five French ports —namely, Cherbourg, Brest, L'Orient, Rochefort, and Toulon; and that the words are equivalent to our arsenals and dockyards, as the towns may be taken to be the French counterparts of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Sheerness, and Woolwich. My first effort on arriving here was, of

course, to see the docks and arsenal; but during the last eight days all strangers are prohibited from entering, unless a formal demand in writing is made by the consul of the nation to which the individual applicant belongs. Nor is this rigour extended alone to strangers. Native Frenchmen are not permitted to enter, unless they come provided with a recommendation signed by two inhabitants of the town. I will not trouble you with the difficulties I had in obtaining an *entrée;* suffice it to say, I gained my object, in acceding to the condition that I should be accompanied by a gend'arme—a condition, by the way, which several Englishmen have, more punctiliously than praiseworthily, rejected during the past week.

You are aware that the works on a grand scale commenced at this port under the reign of Louis XVI., to whom, as I in a former letter remarked, the French navy are so much indebted, and which were continued under the Imperial Government, were in a great degree suspended during the Restoration. The Revolution of 1830, however, gave an impetus to the French navy, which the prudent and sagacious monarch who now "reigns and governs," was not slow to second. I had not been here since the year 1827, when the Henry IV., of 110 guns, was placed on the stocks, and the progress which has been made in the last ten or twelve years asto-

nished me not a little. Cherbourg is now a town of first-rate importance as a *place de guerre* and *port militaire.*

With an open channel at the *embouchure* of the Divelle, it incloses within the circle of its vast bay Cape Levi on the east, and Cape La Hogue on the west. The two ports, the one for the military, the other for the mercantile, marine, are entirely separated from each other. They are defended by an intrenched camp, composed of eight redoubts. The government dock and arsenal, opened in 1813, is situated to the north-west of the town, and is defended by a bastion and fosse, partially dry, dug out of a rock, called the Galet. Here, even at low water, vessels find twenty-five feet water, and thirty sail of the line may ride in safety. In 1833, several *cales de construction,* or slips or stocks for first-rate men-of-war, were finished, and in one of these now lies the Friedland, three-decker, of 120 guns; two others are occupied by two frigates, one the Calypso, of 84, and the other of 64 guns, while in the fourth lies a *gabarre,* or store-ship. All these vessels will be ready for sea, and in commission, by the 15th of October. It is therefore no marvel that the marine artillery has been augmented from 1367 to 2014 men, giving an increase of 647 men; or that the effective force of the marine is raised from 10,963 to 15,809,

giving an increase of 4846 men. Nor is this all; for I believe a plan is now in contemplation, and may be possibly in execution before the end of the week, to extend what is called the "Inscription Maritime," not only to the *mariniers des rivières*, or watermen, but to the *marins caboteurs*, or those engaged in the coasting trade. By another ordinance of the 31st of August, fifty new companies are ordered to be formed for ships of war, which are to be thus distributed: — twelve at Cherbourg, nine at Brest, six at L'Orient, five at Rochefort, and eighteen at Toulon. In consequence of this augmentation, the number of permanent men-of-war's companies, which was altogether 120, giving an effective of 12,360 men, will henceforth be 170, presenting an effective of 20,400 men.

It is also quite true, as you have been, perhaps, by your Paris correspondent already informed, that the naval contingent of the class of 1839 are ordered to join their corps from this very 15th of September on which I write. When I tell you that the rigging of one of the frigates which I saw yesterday (the Calypso) is finished, and the rigging of the Friedland, of 120 guns, has actually commenced, you, as well as your readers, will judge whether these are mere demonstrations, "full of sound and fury, and signifying nothing;" or whether they are but the prelude to that most dreadful of all

calamities, which we all deprecate, and which sane men will do their utmost to prevent. Meantime is it not right to inquire what the Elliot and Minto clique are doing about our navy? Is

> "The flag that's braved a thousand years
> The battle and the breeze"

to be trailed in the dust by hungry Scotch adventurers? It will not do to say the French fleet is a mere "pasteboard fleet," as was truly but unwisely said of the Russian, for the ships which I have seen are as well built, and will be nearly, I will not say as well, manœuvred as though they were manned by those "hearts of oak" formerly the pride and glory of England, now the stepchildren of Admiralty officials.

I should also tell you, that these armaments are not confined to mere military preparations, as you will see by the advertisement of which I send you a copy, and which has been affixed, in all the permanency of the largest print, on the walls within and without the town:—

"OUVERTURE DES TRAVAUX DE FORTIFICATION DU PORT DE MILITAIRE DE CHERBOURG.

"AVIS AUX OUVRIERS.

"Les ouvriers terrassiers sont prévenus, qu'à partir de ce moment, ceux qui voudraient se faire inscrire pour les travaux de fortification du port militaire, pour se présenter chez M. Le Jéal de Hacouville, Rue de la Comédie.

"Les ateliers sont ouverts en ce moment pour les terrassiers; les maçons et charpentiers sont incessamment mis en activité."

In consequence of this notification some hundreds of workmen have presented themselves, and all have received instant employment. A large steamer is in constant communication between the town and what is called the "Digue," and has been perpetually employed, not only in carrying out workmen, but also gun-carriages, which are to be mounted and placed on the fort, which is guarded night and day by national guards belonging to the *Travaux Hydrauliques*. Cherbourg is, therefore, in one perpetual din from morning till night. What with the exercising and reviewing of soldiers, the arrival of marine recruits, the working of forges, the blasting of granite rocks, the raising of mounds, bastions, counterscarps, and other "engines of war, diré and horrible," there is no rest or repose for the wearied stranger who tarries within these gates; and, while I write, I learn that the Norman and Breton jargon of hundreds of discordant voices which I hear around me screaming horribly in thin treble, is to be mellowed into deeper diapason by the more sonorous barytone bawling of 2000 refugee Spaniards, who are forthwith to be put into activity on the public works; so that the French public is pretty much now in the con-

dition of the *bourgeois gentilhomme*, in whose name junketings of all sorts are profusely ordered by one who takes the whip hand over him, but for which the said *bourgeois* has in the end inevitably to pay. "*C'est Monsieur qui l'ordonne* (says the *bourgeois*, plaintively), *mais, Grand Dieu! c'est moi qui paye.*" A day of reckoning will also inevitably come for these brave, nimble, but too susceptible Gauls, and then, too, they will find to their cost, "*C'est Monsieur Thiers qui l'ordonne, mais, Grand Dieu! c'est nous qui payons.*" Already, indeed, is this in part felt in the parts of the country which I have visited, for the incorporation into the army of the young soldiers of the classes of 1836 and 1839 has raised the effective force to an amount far beyond the capacity of barracks and quarters; and the result is, that this bellicose, but most frugal and thrifty nation, will be obliged to afford billets to about 56,000 men and 20,000 horses. For the men, I need not tell you that it is not a little that will satisfy them; and as to the horses, they must fare as they best can. Add to these expenses the additional cost of 100 new *capitaines de vaisseau* and of 200 new *capitaines de corvette*, of additional *élèves* at all the marine schools, of 10,000 additional sailors, and, perhaps, as many more workmen and artificers, and you will have a bill very much calculated to give certain economic

twinges resembling rheumatic gout to Joseph Hume, but for which, at all events, France and Frenchmen will have a navy calculated, as they hope and believe, to cause their name and nation to be respected.

To return, however, to the description of the Port Militaire. The dockyard is surrounded, as in our country, with magazines, storehouses, and buildings, all dedicated to the service of the state. The basin, as I before stated, is capable of containing thirty sail of the line, and vessels can come in and go out either at ebb or flow, there being sufficient water to keep them perpetually afloat. Nor is the commercial port, frequented by coasting vessels, less admirable, for it offers almost in every respect similar advantages. The roadstead affords capital anchorage in the offing. It is protected by three forts—the Fort Royal, that of the Island of Pelée, and Fort Artois, and is enclosed by a dike of 1933 toises in length, and at 2000 toises from the mouth of the harbour.

On this part of the subject I shall have to enter more at length in subsequent letters; but to-day the imperious necessity of making you acquainted with the *cales de construction*, or stocks, and the *ateliers ces forges, des machines fonderie et corderie*, or forges, machine workshops, founderies, and ropewalks, compels me to abandon all other

subjects. The *cales* are four in number, and each of 117 metres in length; their height 26 metres. The building of each cost 520,000f.

In addition to the vessels preparing for commission, of which I made mention in a former part of this letter, there are the Diomed, of 90 guns; the Ajax, of 100; and the Henry IV., on which the carpenters for the moment have ceased to work, in order to prepare with greater promptitude the Friedland, the Calypso, and the smaller frigate, already rigged. There is also a stock for repairing, careening, and thorough careening, which in nautical terms means heaving the ship's keel out, as parliament heeling or boot-topping means half careening. The equivalent French term for this Attic of the ocean is *cale de redoub et de carénage*. This latter dock is of the form of a ship, and vessels come into it at full tide. It is then shut by a *bateau porte*, or water-wicket, and pumped dry by a steam pumping-machine, when the *redoub*, or in Jack-Tar phrase the repair, and speaking of the ship's timbers and planks, commences. This dock is 74 metres long, 28 in breadth, and is 8 metres deep. It was commenced in 1811, and finished in 1813, and cost 571,100 francs.

The forges and founderies of Cherbourg are the children of the July revolution. They were

commenced in 1831, and finished in 1832 and 1833; and here it was, as well as in the rope-walk, that I traced, certainly with surprise, though without dread, the astonishing progress which this persevering, ingenious, industrious, excitable, and most valiant people, have made since 1830. If the English nation needed any *stimulus* to exertion, here it lies in the fiery bosom of these forges. If they are to maintain, as they ever have maintained, and as I pray to God they ever may maintain, the dominion of the seas—if they are to "ride on the whirlwind" and to "direct the storm" of the ocean—if they are to protect the weak and to chastise the strong—if they are to guard their own firesides, their "*lares et penates*," as they have hitherto guarded them, against foreign foes—if they are to maintain, as they ought, the "right of search," for which they fought and bled bravely and profusely—if they are to sustain, as they ought and must, the *mare clausum* of the great and learned John Selden, they will take heed in time, and not "sleep the slumber of the sluggard." Above all things, they will cast away from them those men who sacrifice the "wooden walls of old England" to miserable savings of cheese-parings and candle-ends; for this is a time and season when the French marine strides on rapidly—ay, *à pas de géant*—and if we

stand still, most assuredly we are undone. Here in these *ateliers* are 12 double fires, and what is called "*un grand feu avec martinet,*" which signifies an immense hammer and anvil, moved by steam machinery, as perfect and as regular as any thing one could see in the manufactories of Leeds, Birmingham, or Manchester.

Here I must break off for the present; but permit me in conclusion to say, that the ropewalk for the manufactory of cables exceeds in length and in the number of workmen any thing I have seen in England. I should say, at a rough guess there were at this moment close upon 500 men and boys employed in this, the greater part at from 40 sous to 3 francs per day.

They are all sailors in one sense of the word, but, as if to shew how the martial genius, bent, and tendency of this extraordinary people, overbears and obliterates the naval *specialité*, all the complex evolutions of the *corderie* were performed by beat of drum to those popular and inspiriting airs, which, to use a phrase of Milton, would create (in a Frenchman's breast at least) "a soul under the ribs of death." Though I am not ashamed to confess that I am like the Figaro of Beaumarchais, *rusé*, *rasé*, *blasé*, and therefore the reverse of enthusiastic, yet as I paced down these noble covered allies, and saw the glistening eye,

and heard the martial song, and the loud beat of drum, I caught a portion of that enthusiasm, which is in some sense communicable and electric, and I said to myself, in going out in a torrent of rain, "Would to Heaven that we had some one to take care of the navy of old England!" You will say "Amen" to my fervent aspiration. In my next I shall, perhaps, speak more at large of the French navy.

CHERBOURG.

Activity reigning in the Port of Cherbourg.—Peace and War.—Parties for and against.—Former Exports from Cherbourg.—Trade to Chandernagore, Isle of Bourbon, &c.—Exports, Imports, and loading Trade.—Cherbourg the Hotel of the French Channel.—Annual Export of Eggs.—Custom-house Duties.—Outlay on the Digue.—Increase in the Naval Estimates.—New Preparation of Mess Beef.—Authorities at Cherbourg.—The Maritime Prefect Admiral Martineng.—The Commissary of the Marine, M. de la Gatinerie.—Rank and Authority of these Functionaries.—Importation of Lead.—Ovens à la Wilkinson.—Preparations for War.—System of Manning the Navy.—Fresh Contracts for the Service—Improvement in Agriculture.—Abbé St. Pierre.——Abbé Beauvais.

Sept. 17, 1840.

My last letter will have given you some idea of the activity which reigns in this port, and of the public works which are in course of execution. In the present I will say a few words on the dispositions and feelings of the inhabitants. I believe that the very enlightened few who live in this town and its environs are sincerely desirous

of peace, but the artisans, the workmen, the small shopkeepers, and the great mass of the lower orders, would not be sorry to see war break out anew. This, though at first sight it may appear extraordinary, is not after all so much to be wondered at. In a time of war, or of preparation for war, the whole of the population is employed, and gaining money. The *ports militaires* are places of *entrepôt* and transmission, and thousands of the working classes, the most numerous in every nation, gain their bread by the production, the transportation, and the fabrication of articles which are always needed when a rupture of the peace is imminent. Besides, it should always be remembered that this is not a commercial town, but a great arsenal, and the small share of commerce which it had formerly has generally not increased, and in some particulars has notably diminished. For instance, there was formerly a very considerable tonnage engaged in the whale and cod-fisheries, which fisheries are now, as far as relates to Cherbourg, totally abandoned. At the period, too, when France had colonial possessions of some importance in the West Indies, there was a great exportation of mules from Cherbourg; but now, having nothing but Martinique, Guadaloupe, and Mariegalante, this commerce is necessarily much diminished. The trade to Chandernagore, the

Isle of Bourbon, and the Indian Ocean, always inconsiderable, is monopolised by Marseilles and Bordeaux; while that of Guiana, Goree, Senegal, St. Pierre, and Miquelon, as well as the great American commerce, falls to the lot of Havre. Cherbourg, instead therefore of being a port of export, is in reality a port of comsumption. On an average of the last few years the exportations have been made in 60 French bottoms, amounting in measurement to 2250 tons, while the importations have been made in 66 foreign vessels, averaging a measurement of 20,000 tons. The value of articles imported in French bottoms amounts on an average to 75,000f.; while the imports in foreign ships represents a value of 1,230,000f.

The annual value of the exports, in which 320 vessels are engaged, measuring in the whole 5500 tons, amounts to 1,900,000f.

The coasting trade of Cherbourg employs about 14 vessels, of 1300 tons, manned by 80 seamen. The smaller coasting trade employs from 100 to 110 vessels, of 3500 tons, which are manned by 445 men.

There are 92 fishing vessels, whose crews amount to 370 men, and the produce of whose industry represents so small a sum as 60,000f. The number of vessels annually entering the port is about 1600. Two-thirds of this number

run in here, however, as a mere harbour of refuge, which caused Vauban to say that "Cherbourg was the hotel of the French Channel." No inconsiderable portion of the exports are to England; of one article, I mean eggs, you will be amazed at the annual exportation. The quantity of eggs sent to London alone amounts in value to more than 1,000,000f. per year.

The custom-house duties are as follows:—

		Francs.
1st.	On importations.....	93,000
2d.	On exportations.....	22,000
3d.	*Le Droit et demi-droit de tonnage*.....	52,500
	Total.....	167,500

Now, all these sums sink into insignificance in matter of receipt and disbursement when compared with the outlay in the arsenal in time of war, coupled with the sums which have been within a few years expended in completing the Digue. From 1819 to 1837 there was disbursed on these public works no less a sum than 1,700,000f. In the budget of 1838 a further sum of 600,000f. was granted; and it is estimated that 800,000f. additional will be required at the least for the completion of the harbour and its dependencies.

When, therefore, I tell you that the inhabitants are only 20,000 in number, that 15,000 at least among them are daily labourers; that there

is little foreign trade and no manufactures worth speaking of; that they are very nearly as obstinate, as narrow-minded, and litigious as their ancestors were a century ago (for the proverb says, *Processif comme un Normand*, or *Guerre au Normand*, to designate disputatiousness); that they are often sottish, and occasionally sullen; that they live on barley-bread and buckwheat porridge, with a bit of pork about once in the week—you will not be surprised that one should occasionally find among them a fool who thinks his own condition would be bettered if all his neighbours were engaged in fisty cuffs, he "knows not why and cares not wherefore." It is after all, however, very immaterial how beings so wholly null and unintelligent think and feel. I merely advert to the patent desire for war as one fact which strikes the passing stranger, and which might be tortured into a kind of popular opinion, prevalent through the whole country, if it were not explained and accounted for from extrinsic and other circumstances. There is, however, some excuse for these poor peasants. Their opinions are altogether traditionary; and when it is remembered that our countrymen twice set fire to the town, and in 1758, just 82 years ago, completely sacked it, levying contributions at right and at left, it is not wonderful

that time has not altogether extinguished a hatred which heretofore burnt more fiercely.

There is also considerable excuse to be made for subordinate *employés* in the dock-yards (whose opinions are certainly bellicose), when I tell you, that in the Marine Budget for the present year, in the estimate of *Edifices fondé à Terre et à la Mer*, I find an increase in the estimate of 30,000,000f. — (*Compte Matériel de la Marine, session* 1840.) The following is the actual value of provisions at this moment in store here:— Wheat, comprising flour, biscuit, &c., 43,409f., mess beef and other meat, in barrels and otherwise, 213,470f.; *assaisonnements*, 6957f.; wood, candles, and oil, 3071f.; small objects, 3963f.; making a total of 270,922f. The amount of the wages of the workmen at Cherbourg in the last budget was 46,237f., making a total of 317,159f.

The mess beef and mutton in this estimate is now prepared at Morlaix by a new chemical process. I should like much to know whether Lord Minto, who gained an unenviable notoriety in correcting the prosody of Sir Walter Scott, is aware of this process, a subject far more material to England and to the First Lord of the Admiralty, than all the dactyles and spondees which might be culled by the most perfect

prosodian out of the thesaurus of old Henry Stevens.

The chief authorities here are the Contre-Admiral commanding, who is also Maritime Prefect, and the Commissaire-General of the Marine. The Rear-Admiral is M. de Martineng, who formerly performed these high functions at Toulon; and I am bold enough to say that no sovereign in Europe possesses a more able, a more intelligent, or a more admirable administrator. Of the blandest and most winning manners, easy, approachable, frank, and communicative, Monsieur le Contre-Admiral Martineng unites to these gentle, fascinating, and social qualities, the highest scientific attainments in his honourable profession. I have rarely met a man with whom I was so captivated; "*Il a plus que tout le monde l'esprit que tout le monde a.*" This excellent public servant was for some years a prisoner in England. He spent eleven months at Tiverton, and the rest of the time at Stapleton, near Bristol. He does not forget, in his prosperity, the attentions he received from the Duke of Beaufort and others during his captivity in England.

The Commissary-General of the Marine is M. le Baron de la Gatinerie, who, as well as the admiral, is a native of the south of France. As an administrator he has no rival; and I believe

him to be now one of the most experienced public servants attached to the marine. In times of urgency, the Restoration as well as the Revolution have taken counsel of him. He was here in 1827, when the Duchess d'Angoulême was at Cherbourg; in 1830, when Charles X. bade a final adieu to the land of his birth; and he has been within the last fortnight removed from Bayonne to this place, because of his immense experience and extensive knowledge. He is beloved by all classes, high and low. Though only of middle age, he is altogether of the *vieille roche*, and gives one the idea, as well as the admiral, of what old Brantome calls a *très digne et moult parfait cavalier*. Sir Philip Sydney perhaps expresses the idea more intelligibly, at least to an Englishman, when he describes such a being as possessing "lofty thoughts, seated in a heart of honour and courtesy."

The maritime prefect is always either a vice-admiral (*vice-amiral qui porte le pavillon quarré au grand mât*) or a rear-admiral (*contre-amiral qui porte le pavillon quarré au mât d'artimon*). His functions correspond with those of port-admiral in England. The maritime prefects receive, when not employed at sea, 18,000f. or 720*l.* per annum; and there are extra allowances, which amount occasionally to about 17,000f. additional.

To the commissary-general of marine, some-

what similar to our commissioner-resident at Portsmouth, is intrusted the supervision, audit, and control of all that is going on within the dockyards; and you may judge of the responsibility which weighs on his shoulders, when I state to you the value of the *matériel* of the marine at present in these establishments at Cherbourg. In the hospitals, 173,769f.; in provisions of all sorts, 386,553f.; in naval materials, 25,279,683f.; in marine artillery, 3,771,961f.; in *travaux hydrauliques*, and buildings for the use of clerks, 83,545,492f.; in scientific objects, such as maps, plans, and instruments, 18,838f.; making a grand total of 113,176,296f. There is not an anchor, ground-tackle, yard, sail-block rigger, spar, sail, bolt, or calking-iron, of which he must not be able to render an account; and I must admit the system of control and *comptabilité* is strict and admirable.

While I am recapitulating these warlike materials, I may as well state to you that a portion of a vast quantity of lead, in pigs, shipped from England to Havre by steam, has been recently transferred here. It is recorded of the Dutch, that they sold to Louis XIV. gunpowder, with which he blew up their own towns. I will not say that the English are so "fat-witted" as to do this, but it is, nevertheless, within the range of possibility that this lead may be used against us.

I should also state to you, that all the vessels now fitting out here are furnished with ovens *à la Wilkinson*, doubtless manufactured in some part of England.* The cannons which have been recently transported hither from the forges and founderies of La Chassaude, Ruelle, Nevers, &c., are so constructed that matches are no longer necessary. The piece is now discharged by the striking of a hammer—a contrivance, presenting at the same moment safety and celerity.

The preparations for this war, which most probably will never take place, are carried on with unceasing activity. Since I last wrote, the cutter Levrier, commanded by a *lieutenant de vaisseau*, has arrived here from Havre. The weather has been most stormy, wet, and boisterous; but, nevertheless, the labours at the Digue and dockyards went on without interruption. In the former case it was so much time and trouble lost; for the wind and waves have carried away all that had been done on these days, and for some days before. Though the gales have ceased to-day, and the sun shines out warmly, the engineers are wise enough, after the experience of Monday, not to recommence operations; nor will they, I believe, till Monday next, when the waters

* These ovens, I have since ascertained, are manufactured in France.

will be calm, and the swell have, it is hoped, ceased.

The levies of sailors continue with unceasing vigour. They are now extended from those who have served three, to those who have served four years; and in the immediate quarter of Cherbourg, all the aspirants to the rank of *maîtres au cabotage*, or captains of coasting vessels, as well as the aspirants to *capitaines au long cours*, or for long voyages, are included. This is without parallel in the annals of Cherbourg.

You are aware that the system established by the National Convention for manning the navy still exists. A register is kept, in which the name of every citizen is inserted who is desirous of entering the naval service. From ten to fifteen, boys serve as "mousses," or cabin-boys. Above fifteen, they are called "novices;" and any novice or mousse who has made a voyage of six months, and passed the examination, is an "aspirant," or candidate for promotion. Any one, eighteen years of age, who has made two long voyages, or who has served two years on board a ship, or in the fisheries, or who has been eighteen months at sea, is liable to the conscription; but it has never, as now, been extended to those who have served four years. Those included in the naval conscription are exempt from every other public service, except that of the government

naval service, employment in marine arsenals, or as national guards. Volunteer seamen are employed in preference to conscripts. If the number of volunteers falls short of the contingent required, the deficiency is supplied by a draught from the register.

The maritime districts are divided into quarters, and the sailors in these quarters distributed into four classes :—

1. The unmarried.
2. Widowers without children.
3. Married men without children.
4. Married men with children.

The second class are not called on to serve until the first are found insufficient, and the same rule applies to the third and fourth classes. Sailors of fifty are exempt from serving in a king's ship or in the arsenals. By a law of 1832, seamen engaged in the whale-fishery are exempted from the conscription. The pensions allowed to all seamen, officers, and men, is half the amount of their full pay, after twenty-five years' actual service on board a king's ship, merchant vessel, or in a *port militaire*. There is also an allowance called *solde de retraite*, which is granted after twenty-five years' service in the royal navy, six of which must have been at sea.

With regard to *équipages de ligne*, important ameliorations have been introduced by establish-

ing a distinct body of seamen called *compagnies permanentes de la marine.* This body is divided into separate corps. Each corps is composed of a permanent staff and four companies, and both the staff and the companies have been recently increased.* I am, however, exceeding the limit which I proposed to myself, and I must, with your permission, recur to the subject in my next letter.

I have written to you so much on the subject of the navy, that you must allow me to conclude this part of the subject by stating that a fresh contract is advertised for to the following effect:— 12,000 kilogrammes of oil, 4000 kilogrammes of white lead, 4000 kilogrammes of white wool for mattresses, and 4000 kilogrammes of horsehair for a similar purpose.

Agriculture is decidedly improving in this part of Normandy. The potato is now much cultivated where buck was formerly sown; and much of the small potatoes, as well as the famous Norman butter-milk, is used to fatten pigs for the use of the navy. Much waste and fallow is now within the dominion of the plough, and there is no want of green meat for cattle, since clover and lucerne are so much cultivated. The roads are also in course of improvement; but still in

* Some portion of this detail is borrowed from a very useful work, entitled Goldsmith's "Statistics of France."

this and in other respects there is much progress to make. The country, however, was improving daily, and would continue to improve, if this martial din were suffered to die away. Alas! that the jealousies, susceptibilities, and vanity of two men, should sow discord between the inhabitants of the two most civilised countries in the world!

The Abbé St. Pierre, the author of a project for perpetual peace, was a native of this place. Could he rise from his grave, and again "revisit the glimpses of the moon," how his simple soul must be amazed to hear the din of preparation for this "much ado about nothing" war! *Beaucoup de bruit et peu de fruit,* as the proverb says, and which also runs well in Lord Bacon's translation of "much bruit and little fruit."

Cherbourg has scarcely given birth to a celebrated character, if I except the Abbé Beauvais. He it was who came to interrupt the slavish repose of the French pulpit, and to tell truth to the king in the hearing of the people. In the midst of the corrupt and libertine court of Louis XV. he alone dared to awaken the king to a sense of his duty by these bold and manly words,— "Sire, my duty, as a minister of God, imperiously compels me to tell you that your people are in misery and distress; that you are the cause of that misery and distress; and that the crowd of cringing courtiers who cling around you conceal

from you the truth." It was in the year following this discourse that he preached before the king on the subject of the last supper. His text was, "Encore quarante jours et Ninive sera detruite." This apostrophe to the monarch was so powerful and personal, that it was supposed to have caused his death. Louis survived the sermon forty days, when the eloquent author was called on to pronounce what had always been the posthumous panegyric of the defunct king. In the presence of his successor the preacher exclaimed, "*Le silence des peuples est la leçon des rois.*" Just and memorable words; produced at second hand afterwards, with as terrible effect, by that extraordinary and incomprehensible Gabriel Honoré de Riquetti, commonly called Mirabeau.

BREST.

Arrival at Brest.—Atmosphere of Cherbourg.—Preparations for War.—Road from Cherbourg to Valognes.—Valognes.—Incident outside the Inn.—Hastiness and Susceptibility of the French.—Commerce opposed to War.—Granville.—Coutances.—Avranches.—Conversation with the Innkeeper there.—Character of the Normans.—Norman Fishermen.—Young Conscripts.—Rennes.—Increase of the Army.—Gend'armes.—Road from Rennes to Brest.—Character, Origin, and Costume of the Bretons.—Great Men of Brittany.—Chateaubriand De Béranger.—Similarity between the Breton and Gallic Races.—Churches in Brittany.—Prohibition to Strangers to enter Dockyard.—Reasons for such Prohibition.—Arrest of an English Officer.—Conduct of the Maritime Prefect.—Two Englishmen refused Admittance.

Sept. 22, 1840.

I ARRIVED here this morning, and hasten to give you an account of my journey from Cherbourg, which, notwithstanding the attentions of many of the inhabitants, I left without regret. There is something in the atmosphere of Cherbourg humid and heavy, which weighs on the spirits. The weather there was cold, wet, and dreary, during

the whole of my sojourn, and the elaborate preparations for war which were continually going on under my eye were calculated in my mind far more to debase than to dignify the human race to which we all belong.

The road from Cherbourg to Valognes is exquisite in point of beauty and picturesqueness, and commands in many parts a magnificent view of the sea. The prospect is at once rich, varied, and extensive; and there is an air of softness, verdure, and delicacy, diffused over the scenery equal to any thing to be found in Devonshire or Herefordshire.

Valognes is a small and sweetly situated place without trade or commerce of any kind. It is so much within the wake of Cherbourg, that I was not surprised that many of its inhabitants (who have, as I have said, neither foreign nor domestic commerce to engage their thoughts, and who are many of them brothers, cousins, fathers, or uncles, to those engaged in the dockyards) are infinitely more warlike than wise; of which, as one fact is worth a hundred arguments, I will give you an example. While sitting at breakfast in the small inn, I heard a great noise outside my window. Opening the casement, and stretching forth my neck, I perceived a stout, hearty-looking man, apparently sixty years of age, in a costume half military, half civil, with a musket slung

across his shoulder, followed by half-a-dozen *gamins*, one or two middle-aged men, and three or four women. The old fellow was received with a volley of cheers, which in no degree soothed his vanity; for I could perceive (*malgré* the flattering reception he met with) that he singled out one of the boys, to whom he addressed certain reproaches more plain-spoken than polite. "What is it that has ruffled you, *mon vieux?*" said I, interposing, "for *à l'heure qu'il est* the peacemakers are thrice blessed." "*Cela dépend,*" said the old fellow dryly; and then he proceeded to relate how the day before the young *gamin*, who had been on a visit to Cherbourg, came and told him that the telegraph had made known there that the Prussians were already on the Rhine. "*Vive Dieu!*" said he, "as I am a *vieux grénadier de la garde*, I no sooner learned this, than I marched off to Carentan on the instant, in order to fight those *sacrés Prussiens*, and having arrived there I find this *sacré cornichon* has been playing me a waggish trick, for the Prussians are not on the Rhine. *Mais on nous a insulté, monsieur, on a insulté la France—tout de même.*" At these words there was another volley of "*Vive notre vieux,*" who, gradually "descending from his heroics," smiled approvingly on the crowd which had now gathered round, and proceeded to fight all his ancient

battles over again. This episode, short in itself, gives a better history of the feelings of a portion of the nation than all I could write in a month; but that portion, though large, is neither half so large, so intelligent, nor so influential as is supposed. Were, however, all France composed of men with the instinct of fighting as strongly developed in them as in the old grenadier, I have no hesitation in saying — and I think I know France well—that a sensible and discreet man could always appease them and calm their effervescence by a soft and a kind word judiciously spoken. That they are hasty, susceptible, and fiery on the point of honour, I freely admit; but convince them that no offence is intended, — tell them that you respect their feelings, admire their bravery, and make allowances for the vivacity of their blood, and you can make them do any thing. Nay, the very men who were about to shoot you through the head ten minutes before become your fast and firm friends. That which is true between man and man is also often true between nations; and if there have been (observe, I put the case hypothetically) the least slight, or appearance of slight,—nay, if the French fancy there is either the one or the other in our late transactions with them, or rather without them, in God's name let us not foolishly patter about etiquette, but, de-

claring openly our intentions and our wishes, embrace this vehement and voluble race, and become friends again.

Though the whole of the tract of country between Cherbourg and Brest is at present in the greatest state of anxiety, yet the emotions of the various masses are widely different. In the immediate vicinity of the *ports militaires* there are always some hotheaded young men, or some vehement old moustaches, who, living only on *fortes émotions*, desire a European conflagration; but in half a day's journey from these towns common sense again assumes her ascendancy, and men see the folly and madness of their neighbours. Commerce, after all, is the great *remora*, the powerful drag-chain which must prevent the lumbering French system from overturning. There is in effect nothing more opposed to war than commercial habitudes. Commerce is in its nature repugnant to all violent emotions. It is in its very essence to temporise, to be impassible, and, above all things, to avoid extremes. A trader, like the father of a family, gives, as Lord Bacon says, "hostages to fortune." He is patient, supple, insinuating; and he will not have recourse to extremes unless the *dignus vindice nodus* arises. Now, the commercial men of France, great as well as small, *en gros* as well as *en détail*, see no necessity for war; and I was therefore not

in the least surprised to find that at Granville not only are all the inhabitants opposed to hostilities, but that there is at this moment a question of a strong petition against any interruption of the general peace.

Granville is, as you are aware, a small but a thoroughly commercial town, driving a considerable coasting trade, not only with Nantes and La Rochelle, but also a foreign commerce with the Channel Islands, Southampton, Weymouth, Dover, Ramsgate, and even London itself. The prosperity of this little place had increased, and was increasing. Protected from the north wind, its harbour, though dry at low water, is yet sufficiently deep to receive hundreds of small fishing and coasting vessels; and when I was here last there was a life and movement which now no longer exist. The *armateurs*, or ship-owners, believing fully in the probability of peace, but yet looking to the possibility of war, have not this year sent out the Newfoundland vessels; and the consequence is, that many families are thrown out of employment. Even the trade in salt fish to Spain and Portugal has diminished nearly one-half.

The observations I have made relative to Granville apply to St. Malo, one of the most enterprising seaports in all Brittany. Here also commerce is at a standstill, and all distant enter-

prises abandoned. I am happy, however, to inform you that no nest of privateers or pirates will again issue, at least in any number, from this port. Experience has taught them that this is a game at which two can play, and in which the weakest is sorely worsted.

Coutances, the capital of Cotentin, must be seen to be appreciated. I am a wretched painter of scenery, though I most intensely enjoy its beauty. Here are meadows of the deepest green, beautifully cultivated, with orchards disclosing that yellow tint

"Whose deepness tells
How rich within the soul of sweetness dwells."

Meandering slowly through these fruitful gardens, as though they were going homeward, flow the shining waters of the Sienne, ere they reach the silvery sea in the far distance. The horizon is bounded by the bay of Cancal and St. Malo. It was in this delightful laughing country that St. Evremond, immortalised by Grammont, was born. One can well fancy this exquisite *bon vivant*, whose jests "set the table in a roar," who was always laughed with, yet never laughed at, though he had, like Cromwell, a huge wart on the middle of his forehead, luxuriating on the oysters of Cancal. This fishery gives bread to hundreds of both French and English fishermen, and the innocent pleasure of a light supper or lunch to hun-

dreds of thousands. Are we to have no more oysters because M. Thiers and Lord Palmerston are disposed to quarrel like the Dames de la Halle? "Ay, by St. Anne, and ginger shall be hot in the mouth too!"

"Ridiculum acri
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res."

In approaching Avranches, the Mont St. Michael rising above the blue waves is seen at a distance. Though I visited its gloomy halls and 750 prisoners, I will spare you the description. It would be too horrifying.

From the *Jardin des Plantes* of Avranches, that spot where Peter Daniel Huet, the learned bishop, so often sat and studied, there is a splendid and diversified view. Châteaus, church spires, villages, farmhouses, orchards, and small pocket plats of carefully cultivated ground, meet the eye. The site of the town is most picturesque, and it is no marvel it is the peaceful abode of more than 500 English families. I dined and slept at the Hôtel de Bretagne. The *maître d'hôtel*, a shrewd and sensible man, who had seen much service in his youth, remarked to me, "If we have war, here are 15,000f. a-day lost to the small town of Avranches alone. God knows how many thousands will be lost to Tours, Bordeaux, Nantes, Brives, Boulogne, &c." As I swallowed a glass of Bordeaux to the toast of "perpetual peace," I could

not help thinking that this worthy man had more practical good sense than half the ministers of state in all the courts of Europe.

Early next morning I was *en route* for Rennes, in Brittany. Shortly after leaving Pontorson you quit Normandy, and, as I am about to bid adieu to the country, at least for the present, I may, perhaps, as well give you my impression of the character of that people. The Normans are a keen, shrewd, hard-headed race. I should say *fin* and *rusé;* in other words, crafty and cunning. Among their neighbours they bear the repute of being litigious and overreaching, and I can myself vouch that they are very boastful, and where their interests are concerned not regardful of the truth. They are, however, brave, industrious, frugal, and courteous, but withal cold at heart. The fishermen are among the best of the working population. They are hardy, intrepid, very tolerable sailors, and so indefatigable in the pursuit of their craft, that our shores too often suffer from their at once predatory and piscatory excursions. Though from their number and their union they are well able to protect themselves, I must do the French government the justice to say, that two armed *garde côtes* protect the fisheries of Granville and the whole coast down to St. Malo. Would I could say as much for the poor fellows in the Isle of Thanet!

The road from Pontorson to Rennes was

crowded, I may say encumbered, not only with conscripts for the army, but levies for the marine, going to Cherbourg. I should say I must have encountered more than 500 men; and one-fifth of the number at least are not above 4 feet 9 inches French measure. The exigency must be actually or apparently great which justifies such levies as these. Perhaps, after all, it is but a demonstration to prevent war. *Si vis pacem para bellum.* Be this, however, as it may, these raw recruits were marching onward with vigour and alacrity; and, as they met the passing stranger, they raised one of their wild loud shouts, giving token of their eagerness for the fray of battle. All this warlike ardour, like the courage of Bob Acres, may evaporate and ooze out at the fingers' ends; but midst a sanguine, ardent, brave, and warlike race, this is not likely. The steam is certainly now up at its highest pressure; and unless the vessel be put in motion, or the safety-valve opened, there may be an explosion. Talk of compression, indeed! Mirabeau knew his countrymen better. "*Vous déchaînez le taureau,*" said he, "*et puis vous vous étonnez qu'il vous pique.*"* If war does break out, this martial and populous nation can soon have a great army in the field of battle. It will not be a little war either, nor confined to one nation, for the interests of neighbouring people are now so interwoven that neutrality is impos-

* Dumont: *Souvenirs de Mirabeau.*

sible. It will be a great war on a gigantic scale, for there is not a French conscript, certainly not a French soldier, who does not know that the days of small armies and long sieges is for ever gone by. Henceforth the *tactique* must be great armies and great battles, and this is an additional reason for binding over Lord Palmerston and M. Thiers to keep the peace in large sureties. There is not a sensible man in Europe who does not see that neither the French nor English people, as nations, have any cause of quarrel. The quarrel is solely between two men, and the Angle and the Gaul may well say, addressing these ministers, "A plague on both your houses!"

Rennes is a large and well-built town. It is the seat of a prefecture, of a bishopric, of a supreme court of justice, of tribunals *de première instance*, of schools of law and medicine. It is also the *quartier général* of the 13th military division, and of an *école militaire*. The greatest activity now reigns at Rennes in the military department. The troops, comprising artillery, cavalry, and infantry, are exercised three times a-day for two and three hours at a time. Is all this for nothing? Will it end in smoke only, or in the smoke of cannon? I profess not to vaticinate. I merely give you facts. From the increase made to the effective of the army every where that I have been, however, the military authorities appear to be of the

opinion of that great old robber, Frederick of Prussia, "*que le bon Dieu est toujours à coté des gros bataillons.*" 750 Holstein horses for the cavalry are expected at Rennes to-morrow; these must, on an average, have cost somewhere about from 450f. to 500f. each, and here is an expense alone in one item for one military division of 375,000f. or 15,000*l.* of our money.

Nor is the activity confined alone to the army and navy. The gend'armes are all on the alert, and the moment you enter any town, and descend either from your own carriage, the *malle poste* or the diligence, a couple of these friends to the liberty of the subject emerge from their dens, and with eager earnestness, yet perfect civility, disregardful of the hunger, cold, and fatigue you are suffering, while you are yet busily engaged in paying the postilions, or ordering your *lait de poule* and *bonnet de nuit* (as De Béranger sweetly sings it), demand with distrustful look and scrutinising eye your passport. Nature, which abhors a vacuum every where, but most in the stomach, can no longer stand this — the English "gorge rises" — the John Bull blood mantles and tingles in his veins, and, if not absolutely savage and reproachful, you are tempted to exclaim with Madame Roland, under more certainly harassing vexations, "Oh, Liberty! Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name."

The road from Rennes to this place is good, but extremely hilly. In one part there are no less than thirty-two hills. The country is wretchedly cultivated, but is finely wooded, and in many spots is highly picturesque. A great part of the land is totally unreclaimed, and much resembles portions of the west and south of Ireland.

The Bretons, though brave, laborious, and economical, are, like all the Celtic tribes, inferior to the Norman and Saxon—witness the Welsh, Belgians, and Irish, and these very Bretons, all the heirs male in line direct of the Cimri or Kymri, of whom Field-Marshal Julius Cæsar has given a description which holds good to the present day. Obstinate in their opinions and prejudices, mistrustful, bigoted, self-willed, and vain-glorious, they have hitherto resisted all efforts made to reclaim them from semi-barbarism. In almost all the arts of life they are behind the rest of France. Much of this is, doubtless, the result of the topographical conformation of the country; some part of it is also owing to the narrow-mindedness of the landlords and proprietors; but a great deal, and perhaps most of all, to the intractable and indocile nature of the race from which the Bretons spring. The communes in Brittany are not, as in great part of France, near to each other; on the contrary, the towns are few and distant from each

other; and even, though the parents were willing to send their children to the primary schools, the remoteness of these from their habitations would be an almost insuperable obstacle. The outward appearance of a Breton discloses his almost savage state. Covered with enormous goat or sheep-skins, wearing his long shaggy hair under a slouched hat of immense magnitude, he appears withered, starved, and diminutive. His hut, often without windows or chimneys, is but a degree better than the cabins of Connemara; and his food is nearly as stinted in quantity, and as wretched in quality, as the diet of the peasantry whom that pirate in politics, that poltroon in private and in public, and that impostor in every thing, yearly robs of their hard earnings. His trousers are loose, and in the Greek and Turkish fashion, covering but to the knee; he is religious, attending church on all saints' days and holydays; and charitable, as far as his means admit: but on the whole he must be placed as one of the lowest of half-civilised beings.

But Brittany, like most half-civilised countries, has produced great warriors and illustrious names

Compounded as this fellow is of brigand, beggar, quack, and poltroon, the latter decidedly predominates. Witness Belfast: his false name was felicitously chosen. The real Mr. Charles was an eminent "thimblerig" and sleight-of-hand man, practising legerdemain and swallowing crown-pieces.

in literature. Among the great commanders, Duguesclin, Olivier de Clisson, Lanoue, Dugay Trouin, and Moreau, may be numbered; and in the *belles lettres* there is that exquisite painter of manners, that prince of an easy and flowing style, Lesage, the Jesuit historian of the peace of Westphalia, the Père Bougeant, Duclos, and Guingené. Among poets, I need but mention De Béranger, who has perfectly seized —

> "L'art d'attraper facilement,
> Sans être esclave de la rime;
> Ce tour aisé cet enjoûment,
> Qui seul peut fair le sublime;"

and, maugre all his faults and eccentricities, one of the most eloquent of prose writers, Chateaubriand, who was born just seventy-one years ago (*comme le temps passe et comme je suis passé*), at the château of Combourg, in the middle of the sands of Brittany.

Normandy, though superior in civilisation, can present no such names as these. Almost her sole literary illustration is Madame de Sevigné, who was Norman by birth, though her letters were written from the château of the Rochers, in Brittany. With all her talent as a *raconteuse*, and with all her tenderness for her daughter, Madame de Sevigné was nevertheless a cold-hearted and selfish being, whose whole thoughts, feelings, and wishes, were centered in a child

who did not care for her. After all I begin to think that the art of letter-writing is not so wondrous difficult, especially to a woman. What can be more exquisitely, more admirably, expressed than some of the letters of Madame Laffarge? Normandy, however, though not eminently literary, has done herself immortal credit in adopting literary men. Evreux sent the eloquent, learned, and philosophic Guizot to the Chamber of Deputies, and Valognes has recently chosen for member the ingenious and speculative De Tocqueville.

I have said the Bretons are a religious people, and so truly they are; but it is religious in the one holy Roman and apostolic faith, as they tell you themselves. Here the doctrines of the purer and reformed faith have made no progress, whilst amidst the shrewd and active-minded Normans, on the contrary, Protestant temples have existed at Alençon, Saint Lo, and Valognes, since 1562. It should never be forgotten that when these poor Huguenots were oppressed by the rigorous measures put in force against them, our great Elizabeth sustained them against Charles IX. In our own day Protestantism is on the increase in Normandy. In 1832 there was no Protestant church in Cherbourg; now there is not only a Protestant church, but a congregation of more than 200.

You are aware of the very great similarity

which exists between the Breton and the Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic languages. I know sufficient of the Gaelic to be able to say, that the languages are identically the same in a few words and phrases; and had I a more copious vocabulary at command, I might, perhaps, discover still greater similarity. The divisions or land-marks of farms are also similar to those used in Ireland and Wales, and there is a remarkable similarity in the hedging and fencing of the smaller farms. The older churches throughout Ireland resemble the churches in Brittany, but the latter are certainly more light and graceful, though built in the same style of architecture.

Of Brest I will not speak to-day, but you shall have a full account of this place to-morrow or the day after. I must, however, tell you, that during the last six days no one is admitted into the arsenal on any pretext whatever; but I repeat, nevertheless, you shall have "a full, true, and particular account" of what is doing here. There are three reasons assigned for this strictness, which extends even to native-born Frenchmen, and each of them is, in my mind, sufficient to justify the authorities and the government in a peremptory refusal to all the world. In the first place, some one of the mischievous press of Paris visited the port on the 14th, and two days afterwards published in his paper that

the convicts engaged in the dockyards had conspired to set fire to the buildings, and that the workmen had struck for wages. This was a pure invention of this blundering *Badaud*, who had possibly never seen the sea in his life, and knew not a corvette from a ship of 120 guns; for to suppose him otherwise than ignorant and imbecile would be to suppose him not only a traitor to his country, playing into the hands of her enemies, but also desirous of fostering a civil, perhaps a servile war. The second reason is not less cogent in my opinion. An English post-captain of mature age, a cool and calculating Scot (the thrifty and prudent genius of the Tweed had for once abandoned him), penetrated, unperceived, and without permission, into the dockyard. He had seen a great deal, and was comfortably hugging himself in the idea of how vastly clever he was, when all of a sudden it was discovered he had no permission, and had entered without a gend'arme. The matter then became serious. He was asked to declare who he was, which he did frankly. It was for a moment doubted that an English captain would so commit himself at such a juncture, but it was put beyond the possibility of doubt before the evening sun had set. This officer had commanded off Senegal, and it so happened there was a French naval officer in Brest at the moment who had

known him there. Explanations then took place, and I learn that the statement of the English officer, that he entered inadvertently, was deemed sufficient. Still the circumstances are unpleasant; and, if not unfortunate, to use a Navarino word, "untoward." Nobody could behave better or more gracefully than the Maritime Prefect, M. l'Amiral Grivelle. To wear off any unpleasant impression, he asked the captain to dinner; an invitation which the latter, perhaps from praiseworthy motives, declined. I impute no blame to any one, but I repeat, in the present temper of men's minds, even Scotchmen should be more circumspect than usual. There are never wanting those who impute these intrusions into dockyards to worse motives than justifiable curiosity. An account of this circumstance was telegraphed to Paris, and the result is, that nobody is now allowed to enter the dockyard who is not an *employé*. I think the Minister of Marine is right in enforcing that order, and if I were in his place I would act as he has done. On these circumstances you may rely: I have them from good authority. I send you in confidence the name of the officer for your own private information. The third circumstance results from the two previous, and is a complement of them. Two Englishmen arrived here four days ago, and were refused admittance. There has been since published in *Galignani* a

letter signed "An Englishman," complaining of this: thus, in a time of impending war; making the press an arbiter in an affair of discipline in a town where there are more than 3000 criminals employed in the government works. This is really too bad, and the consequence is, that the innocent suffer with the guilty. The French government, in relation to these preparations for war, has nothing to dread, and nothing to be ashamed of, if the truth be told; but if people will, like the Parisian writer, draw on their fancy for facts; or, like the English captain, intrude themselves contrary to rule and without permission; or, like the Englishmen who were afterwards refused, appeal to *Galignani* instead of to the Admiral commanding or to the Minister of Marine, they must take the consequences of their temerity, and enjoy the unenviable repute of preventing the more discreet portion of the public from seeing what they have not seen, because of their own folly and rashness.

As to myself, there is not an admiral or maritime prefect in France, or a minister, to whom I would not make known my name, and the full contents of my letters; for I have nothing extenuated nor set down aught in malice. I am not ashamed of the truth, and they need not be afraid of it. In this spirit I shall go on, and you need not fear to have a full account of the "Ports of France,"—and Brest among the number.

BREST.

Difficulties of the English in entering the Port of Brest.—Absence of English Consuls at Cherbourg and Brest.—Gordon Warhouse.—Difficulty of Attack on Brest.—Marine Dépôt for Wood, and its Value.—The Fortifications.—Defence of the Arsenal, and Difficulty of Retreat.—Roadstead of Brest.—Advantages of the Harbour of Brest.—The Arsenal.—M. Liaist, the Hanoverian and Prussian Consul.—Ignorance and Ill-breeding of the British Vice-Consul.—Brest one of the finest Harbours in the World.—The Diameter of the Roadstead.—Brest a Congeries of Roadsteads, Creeks, and Bays.—Difficulty to Blockade a Squadron at the Port of Brest.—Apparatus for Heating Bullets.—The Bakery of the Arsenal.—The Magasin Général.—The Quay.—The New Ditto.—Dépôt of Cannon.—Machine for Straightening and Preparing Planks.—Filtering and Preparing of Rain Water.—The North Side of the Port of Brest.—Expertness of the French in Marine Forges.—Building of War Steamers, &c.—Vessels in the Roadstead.—Convent of the Capuchins turned into a School of Marine Artillery.—French understand Division of Labour as well as the English.—Activity in the Port among the Mechanics.—Preparations for War.

Sept. 25, 1840.

In my last letter I informed you of the difficulties, almost insurmountable, thrown in the way

of strangers visiting this port, and particularly as regards the English. These difficulties still continue; nor is there any probability, I am sorry to say, of their being speedily removed. It is odd that in a time like the present, when their countrymen have really need of their services, that the English consuls both at Cherbourg and at Brest should be absent from their posts. It is true that the English passing through Cherbourg may claim the good offices of M. Liaist, the Hanoverian and Prussian consul,— a gentleman who, in conferring a favour, has the rare art of almost persuading the recipient that he (the consul) is the person really obliged: but such amiable, frank, and disinterested men are rare; and I have no hesitation in saying, that if it be worth the while of the English consul here (who I believe to be a worthy and obliging man) to receive the salary, it should also be worth his while to attend to the duty in a season like the present, and not to leave the affairs of the consulate to a vice-consul,* who is profoundly ignorant of the manner of dealing with an English gentleman, and whose manners are none of the suavest. In this matter I have no personal feeling, but deem it my duty, nevertheless, to reiterate the complaints which are made of want of courtesy

* I have since been informed that the consul at Brest was engaged at this period on public business at Paris.

on the part of this subordinate. I am aware that great allowance should be made for the naval authorities here; they are in a delicate and difficult position just now; but it is not because one or two Englishmen violated the rule in entering the *port militaire* without permission during the dinner hour, that a general exclusion is to be extended to all Englishmen whatever. I am aware, that within the port itself (for despite admiral, major-general of the marine, gate-keepers, and all the hundred-and-one Cerberi who there keep "watch and ward," I entered, and saw every thing, as I informed you I would) there is an old house, which still preserves the name of "Maison de l'Espion," where an unfortunate Scotchman of the name of Gordon Warhouse was taken and decapitated on the 24th of November, 1769, seventy-one years ago; but it is not because this house remains as a memento of the injustice of the French nation (for Gordon Warhouse was no spy, though he was decapitated as such), that English gentlemen are to be excluded in 1840. "Oh, but," say the authorities, "one Englishman recently got in by stealth, and we must prevent this by excluding all." Now, this I say is, firstly, unjust; and, secondly, impracticable; for, in the teeth of their order, and despite of their prohibition, I have been able to see every thing, and this very day passed through

forty-six, *ateliers* or workshops, and all the docks or slips, at every one of which a vigilant guardian was placed. I could do the same again to-morrow or any day during the week, but there are many of my countrymen who could not, and I see no reason for their exclusion. But I detain you, perhaps, too long from matter more important.

I have no hesitation in saying that the harbour of Brest is one of the finest in the world. I know myself personally but three which may be compared with it, namely, Constantinople, Cork, and Carlscrona, in Sweden. These three harbours certainly present more extensive roads, and so does, I understand, the harbour of Rio Janeiro (for I have not been there), but there are none of them which offer a shelter and anchorage equal to the port whence I write.

Almost altogether closed, there is but one small outlet from the harbour of Brest, called the Goulet, and this passage, defended on either side by formidable fortifications, renders Brest extremely difficult of attack. I had almost said the place is inexpugnable, had I not known that it was more than once in the possession of my countrymen, to whom nothing is impossible. The diameter of the roadstead from its mouth to the *embouchure* of the river of Landernau is two and a half leagues; its breadth is about three leagues. The first thing that strikes you on en-

tering it is the dépôt of wood for the use of the marine. The construction of this dépôt has cost enormous sums to the government, and the wood now actually in it is valued at 7,000,000f. More than 150 workmen are constantly employed in this establishment alone, independently of the clerks and overseers. The fortifications outside this wood magazine were originally constructed by Vauban in 1620; but in 1694 their palpable insufficiency was proved. The English fleet in that year forced the entrance of the Bay of Pouldu, suffering in no degree from the batteries of Quelerac. In 1776 the existing fortifications were constructed. They consist of three irregular bastions, three curtains, two half moons, a redau scarp, and counterscarp crowned with masonry. On this point, which may be considered as the key of the roads of Brest, are placed sixty *bouches à feu* and a garrison of 1800 men. Supposing that a hostile fleet entered thus far into the roadstead, the shore does not present a single spot for disembarkation; and if a *coup de main* were attempted on the arsenal, it would be found defended by formidable batteries. The possibility of failure in such a case must always be looked to, and how, in such circumstances, is a fleet to retreat? Entering only by a west breeze, the wind must chop round suddenly in order to favour a retreat. Now this scarcely ever happens, for

eleven months out of the twelve westerly winds prevail at Brest.

I have said the roadstead of Brest is extensive; but I should rather have described it as presenting a congeries of roadsteads, creeks, and bays, extending over a surface of nearly 15 square leagues, two-thirds of which present excellent shelter and anchorage, and from 8 to 15 fathoms water. Now, a fathom (*brasse*) is 5 feet French measure; and as the French foot is 12·198 of our inches, this makes the soundings considerably deeper than though it were English measure. Allowing a cable's length, or 150 *brasses*, between the vessels anchored, it has been calculated that Nature has enabled this harbour to hold within its bosom all the naval forces of the world. There may be something of exaggeration in this, perhaps, but not so much as would appear at the first blush. If to this rare advantage the position of Brest is superadded, situated as it is in the Atlantic, looking on the north to the *Manche*, or Channel, and on the south to the Gulf of Gascony, it must be admitted that Nature has been more than bountiful. It would be almost impossible effectively to blockade a squadron issuing from these waters; because, from the proximity of the coast signals, and their capacity of descrying an enemy at a vast distance, his position, manœuvres, and tackings, so to speak, are foreknown, and

those whom he wishes to blockade become fore-armed. Besides, a squadron can avail itself of 16 points of the wind to sail out, tack, stretch, or perform any evolution which the exigency of the moment demands. Enough, however, on the position of this favoured spot.

I have now conducted you within view of the arsenal. Long before you enter, the resounding clank of the calking mallet, the hammering of the scupper nails, the din and smoke of dozens of smithies, the cries of sailors, carpenters, gun-smiths, "*E tutti quanti;*" and last, and most horrible of all, the clanking of the chains of 3641 galley-slaves, announce to you that it is not Woolwich, Greenwich, or Sheerness, you are about to enter, but the *port militaire* of Brest. To your left is a battery, level with the surface of the water, named from its shape the Horseshoe Battery. This forms the *avant garde* of the port, and is completely armed. Within it are apparatus for heating the bullets, which lie in huge piles at the entrance.

Behind this battery are the storehouses, cellars, &c. for provisioning the fleet. Here are thousands of barrels of pork, beef, butter, flour, split peas, prepared sorrel, biscuit, wine, brandy, coffee, &c.

Next comes the bakery, which is fireproof, containing 24 immense ovens, with machines for

separating the bran from the flour. Beyond these magazines is a considerable *parc à boulets*, and a very large boathouse; while opposite is the machine for masting or dismasting vessels, called in French *mature* or *machine à mater*, equivalent to the English "Shears or Hulk with Shears," as it is sometimes called. Near this machine is an immense kitchen, called the *coquerie*, where the victuals of all the *équipages embarqués* whose ships are within the port is cooked; nearly opposite the kitchen is moored a cut-down frigate, called *l'Amiral*, so arranged as to contain an *avant-garde* picket, a room for maritime courts-martial, as well as apartments for prisoners.

The Admiral has no very great draught of water, but in the canal in which she is moored vessels drawing 24 to 27 feet have below their keels at least 15 feet.

Not far from this frigate is what is called the *bassin de construction*. It is beautifully built in cut granite, and is the work of M. Groignard. I will not trouble you with a description of this "*bassin*," which would be more especially unnecessary to a maritime people. Below it are the workshops of the artificers in white metal, locksmiths, tinmen, &c.; and next to these is the printing-house of the *port militaire*. I do not say that this latter is as extensive as the printing-

house of *The Times* (which, by the way, I have never seen), but it nevertheless seemed to me very spacious and well arranged.

The brazier's workshops come next in order, then the compass-makers, and finally the library of the marine, which is large, and well supplied with nautical and mathematical works.

This range of buildings is terminated by the *magasin-général*, an edifice of vast extent, but of simple construction. In these rooms are contained such objects as are not delivered in the *ateliers*.

In this rich dépôt there are warehoused articles exceeding in value 30,000,000f.

The quay is below this spot, encumbered with a vast quantity of cannons, not yet mounted, and a large and "goodly show" of anchors, some weighing so much as 1500 kilogrammes; opposite which are the *ateliers* for sail-making, rigging, and ballast.

Next comes the rope-walk, a building of three stories high, with a flat roof. There are eight walks, each more than 1000 feet long. Although MM. Lair et Hubert have introduced into the corderie machines called "De Fulton et d'Huddart," combined with their own inventions, giving a force over manual labour as 21 to 10, yet there are at this moment more than 600 men engaged in this department alone.

The *poulierie*, or shed where blocks are made, next engages attention. Here is a water-mill which puts in movement two saws and an instrument called a *tarrière*, for boring pumps or drilling masts; but it seems, in the present advanced state of mechanical science, to be but a sorry contrivance. The powder-mill and coopers' workshops are within an instant's walk. The cooperage appeared to me to be of very superior workmanship, but these artisans are not now so fully employed as heretofore, in consequence of the substitution of what are called *tôles*, or thin iron tanks, which are considered much more salubrious, more economical, and easier of stowage.

The new quay, which has been erected within a few years, contains a provisory dépôt for old chain-cables, anchors, and old ship-wood in course of demolition. On it also stands the butchery, where the fresh meat for the sailors in the port, in the roadstead, and hospital, is prepared.

I will now bring you across the river in a small boat to what is called the *Recouvrance* side of the arsenal, and there you will find a large dépôt of cannon, and the *ateliers* of the artillery. Here are wheelwrights, cannon-mounters, armorers, casters, &c.

In a small creek on this side of the arsenal are four more *bassins de construction* dug out of the solid rock, which Frenchmen insist are unrivalled.

They are proximate to each other and communicate by gates; the newest of them, finished in the year 12, under the administration of Cafarelli, has been completely sculptured by the hammer out of the rock with such perfection that no facings were required. Here ship-carpenters are constantly at work on the masses of wood which are to serve in the construction of vessels, or, to use a sea-phrase, in the "speaking out of the ships' timbers or planks," *alias* repairing. Here also is a steam-machine for softening, straightening, or bending the planks, as occasion may require. There is also a *pompe à feu*, the invention of M. Frimot, engineer of the *ponts et chaussées*, which empties at one and the same time the four *bassins*, a labour requiring heretofore much time and some hundreds of hands. This pump carries away two hectolitres of water, equivalent to 100 litres, at each stroke of the piston. This machine really works in a superior manner, and the machinery is of small volume. Here, also, are immense filtering machines for purifying the rain-water.

The north side of the port of Brest is entirely occupied by the great forges where anchors, chain-cables, &c., are made and mended. This establishment is far superior in extent, as well as in the number of workmen, to the forges at Cherbourg. It is now in full activity; and I confess I was surprised, not only at the number

of workmen, but the quality of their workmanship. If this nation had, like us, iron in abundance, they would certainly rival, as they now approach, us in the article of marine forges.

I have not as yet mentioned two *cales de construction*, or stocks, of first-rate vessels. One of these is covered over with a wooden framework, the other with a roofing supported by granite buttresses and "swifters," which "frap" (pardon me the nautical term), or encircle the vessel. The whole of this slip is of very admirable workmanship. There is now constructing here a first-rate war steamer, and a vessel of 120 guns. In the other slips there are six frigates, more or less advanced; two of these have 30 cannons of 30, *longs en batterie;* on the forecastle 28 carronades of thirty, and two long 18-pounders, making altogether 60 *bouches à feu*. Among the other four there are two frigates of the second class, and two of the third.

There are besides four vessels, two of the first rank with 120 *bouches à feu;* one of the second rank with 100; and one of the third with 90; besides two corvettes there are sloops of war, with 20 *bouches à feu*, and a *batterie barbette*, *i. e.* from one extremity of the forecastle to the other.

I have not as yet spoken of the vessels in the roadstead. These are not comprised in this estimate, but with certain other matters will make

the subject of a second letter I mean to consecrate a third to the description of Le Bagne, and to the financial details concerning this port.

Above the joinery (with a description of which I will not trouble you) is the ancient convent of the Capuchins, now turned into a school of marine artillery, and in a portion of this building the figure-heads of vessels are also carved; but in this department Brest is far inferior to what Cherbourg now is, and what Antwerp was in the time of the King of Holland. I ought, however, to state, that at Cherbourg the workmen employed in this department come from Paris. The construction of rudders, yards, winding tackle, rails, frames, ribands, clamps, bolts, stanchions, leech lines, wooldings, and head-nuts, is each a separate department or distinct *spécialité*, and the division of labour is just as well understood, and as fully practised, as in the workshops of Birmingham and Sheffield. The whole port is admirably paved with granite, and at every fifty yards there are placed large troughs, some made of stone and some of iron, containing water to feed the engines in case of fire. The canal, however, is too narrow, and at this moment is too much encumbered with shipping. The vessels which are *desarmés*, or lying up, are covered by a sort of wooden casing called

a *charpente*, over which hangs a painted sailcloth, which, impeding the pernicious action of the sun and rain (and it rains in this country 300 days out of the 365), allows, nevertheless, a free current of air to enter.

I have now conducted you regularly through the port of Brest, and given you some faint idea of the vastness of this great national arsenal; but, in order to form a proper idea of its grandeur, extent, and magnitude, you should hear with your own ears the deafening noise of hammer, axe, adze, and anvil—the thundering of artillery, the beating of drums, the rolling of balls—the shrill whistling of master-calker, mastmaker, carpenter, sailmaker, gunner, and the clanking of 3641 chains of galley-slaves; less horrible, perhaps, than the rough, hoarse, gruff voices of this congregated mass of murderers, robbers, coiners, forgers, thieves, and pickpockets.

If the sound be unpleasant—I had almost said horrifying—the sight is at once loathsome, pitiable, appalling. But I must reserve this subject for a letter apart. And now that I have led you over this port and its quays, and exposed to your view its vast magazines, the wealth they contain, in workshops of all arts, and crafts, and machinery of every sort and kind—now that I have shewn you the incessant activity that daily prevails in the simultaneous labour of 12,638 human

beings, 8997 of whom are freemen, and 3641 of whom are wretched galley-slaves—I will simply inquire what is the end and purpose of so much labour, so much science, and so much art? Simply and solely the destruction of God's image —of our fellow-man, perhaps, our fellow-citizen, by the fell scourge of a war which, if it ever take place (which I do not believe), will be without parallel for madness and folly in the annals of the world. It is indeed a desperate chance-medley game, as well as a wicked and a foolish one; and there are often reverses in store for the nations who madly rush into it.

Brest, notwithstanding all its "pride of place and power," has been more than once in the possession of the English; and stronger forts and redoubts than those of her harbour, of nations that were, but are not, are now mouldering in decay. Goëthe, who was a politician as well as a poet, well says,—

"Erde baut auf erde Schlöser von Stein
Erde sagt zu erde alles ist mein."

To my countrymen I would say, "Avoid war by all means;" yet what I see here compels me to utter the mournful premonition, "But be prepared for it."

BREST.

Construction of Frigates at Brest. — The Commerce de Paris. — Its Weight. — Visit to the Roads. — Courteous Behaviour of the Flag Officer and First Lieutenant. — L'Orion. — Its Neatness. — The Prince de Joinville. — Desire of the French Naval Officers for Peace. — Superiority of the Naval Service over the Military Service of France. — The great Science in the Construction of a Ship. — Officers of l'Orion. — The *Abondance* for the Instruction of Cabin Boys. — Their Cleanliness and Excellent State of Health. — Similar to the late Captain Brenton's R. N. School. — Importance of teaching Naval Gunnery. — Readiness of the French Sailors to rush to Arms at Call. — The Ecole Spéciale du Génie Maritime. — No Naval Institution at Brest for aged and disabled Sailors. — Deduction of Three per Cent. out of all Pays for the Support of Infirm Sailors. — Strictness at the Dockyards as to not admitting any Foreigner or Stranger. — Activity of the Pompiers de la Marine. — Mons. Bermout, Lieutenant de Vaisseau, Commander. — Activity in both Army and Navy at Brest. — Variable Climate and extraordinary Changes of Temperature at Brest. — Brest not a Commercial Town, but a Naval and Military Garrison. — Vice-

Admiral Morsad de Galle's Fleet sailed from the Port of Brest for Ireland, December 16, 1796. — Hurricane and loss of three Ships, and finally captured by the English.

Sept. 28, 1840.

In my last letter from this place, I stated that there were, at the moment I wrote, six frigates and four vessels now in course of construction. Among the frigates are l'Amazone, la Medée, l'Ambuscade, and la Vénus. I omitted, however, to state, that the Commerce de Paris, a frigate of the first class, had been masted three days ago, and is in course of rigging now. The weight of this vessel is estimated at 4,500,000 lb.; she is 174 feet long, and 47 broad. When she is mounted with her full complement of guns and men, I ask is there, can there be any comparison, between the number of men and weight of timber and metal in the Commerce de Paris and one of our frigates?

After having thoroughly visited the dockyard, my next movement was to the roads. Taking boat accordingly on the *Recouvrance* side of the river, I proceeded with an old sailor, whom I had pressed into my service from the moment of my arrival (and I adopt the same course in all seaports), to visit l'Orion, a frigate exclusively devoted to the *élèves de la marine*. I was received in the most courteous and affable man-

ner by the flag-officer and first lieutenant, who not only conducted me over the vessel, but explained to me, in the most friendly and obliging manner, the whole course of discipline and studies. I was particularly struck with the neatness and order of the vessel, with the number of the higher mathematical works in the library, with the beauty and finish of the drawings, all the production of the pencils of the *élèves*. It was in this vessel that the Prince de Joinville, now *capitaine de vaisseau*, and who is now on his way to St. Helena to bring back the bones of Napoleon Buonaparte, was brought up; and the captain shews with some pleasure, and not a little pride, a drawing of the Prince, which hangs framed and glazed in a conspicuous part of the cabin.

I will not repeat to you the kind and obliging expressions which these officers used in speaking of England and the English navy. Though their profession is that of arms, and though, like all noble and generous minds, they must pant for an opportunity of distinguishing themselves, they nevertheless did not hesitate to utter the most fervent aspirations for the preservation of the general peace. May their wishes be accomplished!

One is struck at every moment with the marked superiority of the naval over the military

service in France. Independently of the education of the naval officer being much superior, he is generally also in a higher social position, whether with reference to birth or fortune, than the officer of the line, who, in nine cases out of ten, is in no degree more enlightened than, and too often as coarse a being as, the soldier whom he commands.

Besides, there is something in the very idea of a ship which expands and elevates the contemplations of man. The construction of a ship is not only a matter of high science, but of first-rate national importance. All is positive, certain, and, so to speak, demonstrative in the details; the higher branches of the mathematics are called into requisition, and nothing is left to vague, idle, or inapt conjecture. The object, the destination, the stupendous strength and power, the grace as well as the beauty, of these vast masses, "reposing on their own shadows," impart to them a grandeur and vitality which is reflected back on their creator. How is it possible for the youngest midshipman to walk the deck of a 74 without thinking highly of himself, and still more highly of the profession to which he belongs? It is not, therefore, a marvel to me that the officers of the Orion were not only accomplished scholars and gentlemen, but also liberal-minded, candid, and sensible

men. Should these lines meet their eyes, I pray they may be received as they are meant—a slight and feeble testimony of gratitude for the most kindly and obliging services.

Anchored not far from the Orion, lies the Abondance, a vessel for the instruction of the *mousses*, or cabin-boys, of whom there are now 240 aboard. These boys are for the most part orphans, the sons of widowed mothers, or unfortunates deserted by their parents, and are received from the ages of thirteen to fifteen. There are schoolmasters furnished to teach them reading, writing, arithmetic, the mathematics, and navigation. They have also, as well as the *élèves*, a chaplain. This vessel, as well as all the crew and scholars, is remarkable for cleanliness; the boys change their linen twice a-week, and all appear in excellent health. They are all taught trades, such as sail-making, rope-making, block-making, gunnery, &c., as well as seamanship; so that when they become regular sailors, they may, in the intervals between duty, be enabled to be serviceable to the vessel in more capacities than one. This institution is not unlike the naval school of that excellent man, the late Captain Brenton, R.N., but it is, of course, on a more extensive scale. While aboard the Abondance, the *mousses* receive 9f. a-month for their pay, from which 7f. is deducted for their clothing and

equipment. When they afterwards enter into the *équipages de ligne*, they receive a net pay of 17f. 56c., with bread while on shore, and 18f. 10c. gross pay, with rations when at sea; while conscript cabin-boys, temporarily employed in the *équipages de ligne*, to whom a first outfit is not allowed, receive only 8f. 15c. a-month.

It is questionable, however, whether the thus teaching two different trades, such, for instance, as sail-maker and sailor, is beneficial. The plan has long been adopted in the Russian navy; and I can, from experience of that service, say, that they are neither good sailors nor good sail-makers. But that which may be true of Russia may be quite false in reference to France, and *vice versâ*. There is one point, however, in which this teaching may be of great advantage — I mean naval gunnery. I believe the best officers in the English navy are of opinion, that the sailor, when trained, makes a far better naval gunner than the naval artilleryman; and the French, adopting this idea, are now training all their sailors as naval gunners.

There are two other frigates in Brest roads; one called the Aquila, taken from the Mexicans, and the other a French-built vessel, both of which I also visited, as well as the Stationnaire, a guard-ship. The remarks that I have made in reference to the Orion apply to these vessels;

and I tender to the captains and officers of all the expression of my grateful thanks. You are aware, perhaps, through other sources, that nine of the new *compagnies* of the *équipages de ligne* have arrived here. The *compagnies permanentes des équipages de ligne* now amount to fifty-nine, instead of fifty. The levies are extended to those who have served four years—a most harsh and unusual measure; yet, to shew you the alacrity with which this people rush to arms, I will merely mention, that at Quimper, a few hours' journey from this port, only nine were found wanting out of the 765 of which the naval contingent was composed; and of these nine, seven (who had gone to see their sweethearts before their departure) presented themselves the next day before the authorities.

While I have been within these walls, the *corvette d'instruction*, L'Orythée, has gone out to exercise her crew, and the *corvette de charge*, La Caravane, commanded by M. Lesport, *capitaine de corvette*, has come into port.

In my former letter I made no mention of the *Ecole Spéciale du Génie Maritime*, the pupils in which are chosen from those who have pursued their studies at least for two years, and satisfactorily passed their examination in the Polytechnic School at Paris. Rest assured, in the

end, the *élèves* of this school will exercise an important influence on the navy of France.

There is no institution at Brest, notwithstanding the extent and magnitude of the *port militaire*, nor, indeed, has there ever existed in France any asylum for aged or invalid seamen, similar to Greenwich Hospital. But naval invalids, after thirty years' effective service, when supplied with certificates of good character, and, it should be added, protected by powerful interest, may be admitted into the Invalides at Paris. While in service, but while in service only, there is an hospital for sick sailors in this town, and one of the same nature at the other sea-ports; but these, in no respect, correspond to that noble national institution, Greenwich Hospital. To the credit of the government it should, however, be stated, that the pay and allowances of officers, as well as men, indeed, all payments whatever, made on account of the service of the navy, are subjected to a deduction of three per cent, for the support of the sick, and for granting pensions to naval invalids. There is also at Brest, as in all the other principal ports, an *école de médecine de la marine*, where the arts of medicine, surgery, and pharmacy, are taught. The students having finished their studies, and passed their examinations, are either placed on board vessels afloat, or

employed in the marine hospitals, either at home or in the colonies.

A fire broke out a few nights ago, in a house in the Rue de la Crée, belonging to a M. Faque, Commissaire Priseur. The owner alleges that there was no combustible matter within the house, and that no fire had been lighted in it for some days, nor was there any fire in the next house. People thence jump to the conclusion that this was the work of an incendiary; and there are vague rumours, as usual, about foreign influence, and all such stupid *platitudes*, which the well-informed and well-disposed, of course, disregard; but these suspicions, industriously raised abroad, very often seriously inconvenience, and sometimes positively injure, the passing stranger. For instance, a rigorous *surveillance* is still kept up, and no foreigner, indeed no stranger, Frenchman though' he be, is admitted within the dockyard. This is foolish, as well as illiberal; for there is nothing at Brest, in the way of new discoveries, which a stranger could carry away; and every government in Europe knows, or ought to know, the number of ships on the stocks, as well as the number of workmen employed. To return, however, to the fire. While it raged, I had an opportunity of seeing the *pompiers de la marine* at their work, commanded by M. Bermont, *lieutenant de vaisseau;* and I must say they did their

duty very effectively. The damage done amounted, nevertheless, to 8000 francs.

There is quite as much activity here among the army as in the navy. Reviews take place always twice a-day, and sometimes, on dry days, three times; but this event (I mean a dry day) only happens once in three months. For the last fifteen days it has rained here without the intermission of two hours. The climate is, on the whole, mild, but the most variable I ever experienced. Sometimes, in the course of an hour we have the temperature of four different seasons.

Brest is in no respect a commercial town. It is but a naval and military garrison, and therefore a place insufferably uniform and dull. You hear nothing but the din of the dockyard, the firing of artillery, or the drilling of the troops. The greater part of the inhabitants are in bed by half-past eight o'clock, and almost all by nine. On the quay beneath the arsenal a few coasting-vessels are moored. They come laden with wines and brandies from Nantes and Bordeaux, for the consumption of the *bourgeoisie*. Brest exports scarcely any thing, and even that little is shipped from Landernau or Morlaix.

It was from this port, on the 16th of December, 1796, that a fleet, commanded by Vice-Admiral Morad de Galles, set sail for Ireland. It was composed of seventeen sail of the line,

twelve frigates, six corvettes, and a few transports. There were 18,000 troops aboard, under the command of Hoche, with fifteen days' provisions, and six weeks' rations for the sailors. The division of Rear-Admiral Bouvet arrived within sight of the western coast of Ireland on the 24th, and cast anchor at Bantry Bay. A hurricane on the 27th of the same month drove this armament back again to Brest, with the loss of three vessels, which were captured by our fleet.

Such hurricanes do not always spring up; and if Lord Melbourne remain Premier with Lord Minto for first Lord of the Admiralty, an auspicious moment and a favouring gale may come, when the greatest traitor and the greatest poltroon in Europe may invoke the aid of the *tricolor* to carry his favourite measure of the repeal of the union,

In treating of the Bagne of Brest I shall enter into the financial details concerning this port.

PORT LOUIS, MORBIHAN.

Arrival at Port Louis. — Inspection of the Dockyard. — A Newly-invented Bullet by Billette. — Its complete Success.

September 29, 1840.

I ARRIVED here early this morning from L'Orient, and hasten to acquaint you with intelligence which you will deem too important not to give immediately to the public. You are aware that this place is about a league from the *port militaire* of L'Orient, on the other side of the river called the Blavet. On Saturday last I minutely inspected the dockyard, an account of which I have already sent you; but on arriving here to-day I learned from an indubitable source — it is not necessary to say, that I saw with my own eyes, for that would compromise people whom I do not wish to injure — that for the last two months the naval artillery here have been practising on an immense construction of timber, which resembles in conformation and shape a 74 line-of-battle ship, with a newly-invented bullet, discovered by an old naval officer *en retraite*, named Billette. The

property of this bullet or ball, for it may be made of all sizes, is, when it meets with an opposing force, such as the hull of a 74, to explode with terrific effect, shivering vessels into pieces, and thus destroying at one "fell swoop" lives and property to an immense amount. At first the Minister of the Marine was doubtful of the effect of this devastating and destructive projectile, and accordingly ordered essays to be made of the force and effect of this vaunted discovery. These trials have been made by competent authority; and it is found to succeed admirably, inflicting "cureless ruin" wherever it lodges. The account of these essays was sent to Paris pretty much about the epoch when the inventor, Billette, was on his way to Bordeaux on private business. He was recalled instantly by telegraph, ordered to return to the port of L'Orient; and workmen are now engaged under his superintendence, or, at all events, by his direction, fabricating this deadly scourge.

I have not time to say a word more: but comment surely were needless, perhaps, misplaced. If our ministers are desirous of knowing the secret, I believe they may have it.

L'ORIENT.

Difficulty of Writing a Correct Account of the Ports of France, and of obtaining Information.—History of L'Orient.—Port Louis.—The French East India Company.—Origin of L'Orient.—Magnificent Entrance.—Library of the Arsenal.—Length and Breadth of Port L'Orient.—Industry and Ingenuity of the French.—Pay of the French Labourers.—Cheapness of Brittany.—Shears for Masting and Dismasting.—Difference in the Number of French and English Frigates.—Improvement in French Ships.—Great Progress of the French Navy.—L'Orient a Port of Construction.—Preparations of the Military Power.—State of the English Navy.—The Maritime Arsenal.—Commercial College at L'Orient.—Increase of Merchants' Vessels at the Port since 1830.—The Population of L'Orient.—Island of St. Michael.—New Forges.—Value of Rations in Store.—Delivery of Oak, &c. &c. for the Use of the Navy.—Superiority of L'Orient in Vessels.

September 27, 1840.

THERE is considerable difficulty in writing a correct account of the *ports militaires* of France. In the first place, such is the jealousy and narrow spirit of the authorities, that they will not allow the publication, or rather, will not afford the

facilities for the compilation, of guide-books; and, in the second place, the object of the government being exclusively to make of these ports warehouses, workhouses, and dépôts of their own, all trade is rather discouraged than fostered. Hence it is that you rarely or ever find merchants of the first, second, or even third class permanently settled at any of these harbours or arsenals; and, as at the present moment, these places are filled to overflowing by the officers and artisans of the government, all is noisy, busy, and bustling (to use a nautical phrase) as the Prince of Darkness in a gale of wind, you have little chance from them of accurate or extensive information; independently of which, they are recently disposed to look on such inquiries with more than suspicion. Great tact and discretion become, therefore, necessary in seeking for information; and it too often happens, when you find it, that it is like the two grains of wheat in the bushel of chaff. One is therefore necessarily obliged to grope a good deal about before a gleam of light breaks in upon one.

Of the very early history of this place little is accurately known; but, in the absence of positive fact, the misty-minded, but very worthy Bretons meander in all the mazes of fiction. Like all the Celtic tribes, too, they seek for analogies and resemblances where none are to be found, and

descant most learnedly on Celtic names, which would, doubtless, be immortal if they were but pronounceable. I will not go back with them to the time of King Conan, nor, as I am for the "*positif*" in opposition to the "*idéal*," follow them in these, perhaps, dull and certainly profitless dissertations. The modern records of this place date no further back than the time of Louis XIII. Nearly opposite this town, and about a league distant on the other side of the river, that monarch founded a harbour, which still exists under the name of Port Louis. It was, however, in 1666 that the French East India Company, a creation due to the genius of Colbert, in order to render their relations with the Indies more direct, decided on the foundation of an establishment on the shores of the Atlantic. The site chosen for this purpose was the confluence of the Blavet and the Ecorf, a river which empties itself into the sea about half a league from this place, and whose *embouchure* is opposite the island of Groais. For a long time the deserted aspect of this place disclosed the frail and feeble existence of the Company; but at the commencement of the eighteenth century, thanks to the energy, activity, and speculative genius of Law, whose projects are so graphically described by the easy-flowing pen of Duclos, this languishing speculation started into new life, and what was hereto-

fore a paltry *entrepôt* became a flourishing city. Extensive and numerous establishments were quickly constructed; and, in 1738, L'Orient counted a population of 18,000 souls. Six years afterwards, namely, in 1744, the town was fortified, and, as it was the East India Company which gave birth to the place, it was determined that it should bear the name of L'Orient. The town itself is clean and regularly built, and stands out in advantageous contrast to the greater portion of the wretched and filthy villages—all, however, with churches of exquisite Saracenic architecture—which lie between this place and the *port militaire* of Brest. Before entering the port, the passing stranger is struck with the church, which is large and beautiful: its lofty spire may be seen at several miles distance. The theatre, too, is a handsome and extensive building for so small a town, and the meat, fish, and bread-markets are certainly the best constructed and most extensive in Brittany, with the exception of those of Rennes.

L'Orient is, like Toulon, Cherbourg, Brest, and Rochefort, a maritime prefecture with a commissary of the marine. The prefect, as I before observed, is always either a rear or vice-admiral. His salary is 18,000f. a-year, with about 17,000f. of extra allowances; but during the period he is employed as prefect he does not

receive his navy pay. This office is at present filled by Admiral Ducrest, who has recently taken in addition the name of Villeneuve, the latter a rather celebrated name in the French navy.

You enter the port of L'Orient by a magnificent gate, to the right of which is the prefect's château, garden, and stables. Behind this is the library of the arsenal and dockyard, containing a small collection of works on general literature, and a tolerably fair supply of maritime and mathematical works, with maps, plans, charts, &c. This establishment is open from nine o'clock in the morning till four in the afternoon; and any single individual, from the vice-admiral down to the *élève*, or midshipman among the officers, and from the *maître de manœuvre*, or master among the crew, down to the *mousse*, or cabin-boy, may frequent it, consult, and make extracts; and, if he obtain the permission of the prefect, may even take the work home, either to his ship or to his lodging. What an admirable arrangement is this; and surely it is worthy of imitation in our own dockyards!

The port of L'Orient is 600 toises, or 3600 feet, long, and 300 toises in breadth, and the mouth of the harbour is of easy entrance. Though this establishment is on somewhat smaller scale than Brest, and though there is neither *bagne* nor *forçats* within its precincts, yet it is one of the

first *chantiers* in the kingdom. Inferior to Brest in the armament and provisioning of ships of war, it is decidedly superior in the construction of them, not only in reference to the number, but to the workmanship, whether as regards grace, sailing power, force, or durability. Here are nine slips, every one of which is now occupied with a frigate in course of active preparation; and, on the lowest calculation, I should say there must be 3000 men actively and incessantly engaged on these nine frigates alone. It is a great and a prevalent mistake to suppose that the French are not an industrious as well as an ingenious people. They are both the one and the other; and, though they are our inferiors in point of ingenuity, in my humble opinion they are our superiors in intensity and durability of application. In literature and the sciences behold the immense abridgements which they commence and finish; and in these great public labours, in arsenals and dockyards, it is worthy of all admiration to see the zeal, the energy, the zest, and passion, with which they fatigue without exhausting their enthusiastic natures. So early as five o'clock in the morning they are engaged in their willing labours, which are not closed till the evening sun has already set. Many of the more subordinate of these artificers have only twenty-six sous a-day, while the majority of good workmen

receive no more than from thirty to forty sous; yet, despite this miserable pittance, they pursue their unremitting and jocund toil with an alacrity which a deep love of country can alone supply. The chiefs of *ateliers*, you will readily comprehend, are not paid by the day, but receive from 1500f. to 2000f. per annum, according to their ingenuity and merit. It also very frequently happens that the workmen are allowed to do piece-work; and they thus earn considerably more than the sums I have set down. But, when the extreme cheapness of Brittany is taken into account, I know not whether the price of labour will not be found to the full as remunerating here, perhaps more so, than in Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, or even Woolwich, Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Sheerness. L'Orient possesses, as well as Brest, a pair of shears for masting and dismasting; but I decidedly give the preference to the machine of this place. It is a perfect model for beauty and lightness; and appears to me capable of being worked with far more ease and despatch than the larger machine of Brest, whose solidity is not to be questioned, though it may be well doubted whether it is so handy and manageable as the more light and graceful machine of the department of Morbihan. The block-shed here, as well as a portion of the cable-making, is worked by steam machinery; and, as

far as my opportunities allow me to judge, there is certainly nothing superior in England. But it is in the *cales de construction*, or stocks for building and launching vessels, that L'Orient is proudly pre-eminent. There are slips enough for the construction of thirty vessels of all sizes; and, as I before said, nine of them are now occupied with first, second, and third-class frigates. France has already fifty-six frigates afloat, and adding these nine to those already in course of preparation at Brest, Cherbourg, Rochefort, and Toulon, it is not only possible, but probable, that she may have from seventy-five to eighty frigates in commission by Christmas-day, while England, in other times the mistress of the ocean, has now but eighty-six frigates—possibly the one-half of them not in a condition to put to sea. At the epoch of the general peace, a quarter of a century ago, Great Britain had double this number in a state of real efficiency; but, thanks to the miserable cheese-parings and mismanagement of the Whigs, and the chattering of such shallow-pated, mean-minded blockheads as Joseph Hume, our country is fast retrogading, and the right arm of her strength withering away. Nine years ago France had afloat eleven first-rate frigates, nine second-rate, and twenty third-rate, making a total of forty; but I hesitate not to say that before the end of the year 1841, that is, within

ten years from the point from which I have started, she may have more than double this number. I should also state that the frigates of France are all new vessels, and of an improved construction, while ours are for the most part but the *débris* of those gigantic armaments, the wonder and envy of the nations, which were prodigally launched and bravely manœuvred by the past generation.

Human foresight cannot divine what may be the solution of the Eastern question; but if war do really break out—and in a barrel of gunpowder the smallest spark may occasion an explosion—I think it may be found, to our surprise and cost, that within the last ten years the French have made a greater progress in their navy than any nation in Europe, or than all the nations of Europe put together. I do not hesitate confidently to affirm that in beauty and solidity of construction their vessels are far superior to ours; and I suppose even Lord Minto will admit that they carry not only a much greater number of cannon but of greater calibre.

It will not do to say that we have a far greater number of vessels; that is not denied by the French themselves; but the moral, ay, and the physical strength of a force, too, depends not so much on absolute number as on its perfect organisation, discipline, and equipment. Open the page

of history and you will find that the greatest victories have always been achieved by the smallest armies.

I have said that L'Orient is especially a port of construction, and it is in frigates that she is distinguishably prominent. It is in these *chantiers* that have been constructed during the last nine years, and that are now constructing, those formidable vessels carrying on their quarter-decks thirty carronades of 32, twenty-eight long 30 pounders, and two obuses of 30. Nine of these are on the slips here, while, as far as I know, England has not one in preparation. These are frigates which may, without any rashness, be laid alongside an old 74; the broadside of the one would be to the full as weighty and powerful as the other, for the timbers, whether cant filling, floor knucle, square or top, are to the full as solid and heavy as those of an ancient 74; while the frigate possesses a lightness and sailing power which the 74 cannot cope with, much less rival. There is also on the slips here the Semillante, of 110 guns, an amazingly fine vessel, and which, if needed, might be launched in a month hence. A second of 110 has just been laid down, and there are at least fifteen pinnaces, schooner rigged (called *canots d'état major mâtée en goëlette*), with twelve oars, all of which can be "armed to the teeth" at a moment's notice. These, observe

you, are the preparations of a military power of the very first magnitude, with a population of 32,000,000 of men, and a territory which may be called a ring-fence, stretching almost from the German Ocean (for Belgium is but France under another name) along the shores of the Atlantic, where she has Granville, St. Malo, Cherbourg, Brest, and Rochefort, to the Mediterranean, where the basin of Toulon sends forth the whole of maritime France to west or east to execute the nation's bidding. You will not fail to remark that none of these preparations can be to keep "watch and ward," as with us, over distant and discontented colonies in all quarters of the globe, they are intended solely and wholly to be in battalion against Europe. Are our ministers aware of this? Is our Admiralty? Are we about to give up the dominion of the sea and the right of search; or are we henceforth to play a third-rate part in the affairs of nations? I am not fond of hard words, but I do not hesitate to say that the minister, be he Tory, Whig, or Radical, who is ignorant of what is going on in the French dockyards, or who knowing, does not put his country in a position to defend her rights, deserves to have Jacobin justice executed on him in the promptest manner at the nearest lamp-post. Ministerial responsibility has long become a standing joke, but I am as certain as I am of my own

existence, that on the first blush of naval reverses (*absit omen*), the descendants of a people who produced a Blake, a Nelson, and a Jervis, will execute summary vengeance on the incompetent and corrupt Sybarites, who have paltered with a power which even in the time of deadliest civil war a great and able usurper taught to be respected and feared in every corner of the universe.

It is not alone in her docks that L'Orient is remarkable. There is a tower of observation within the dockyard, from the summit of which the naked eye distinguishes Belle Isle, and from which the approach of vessels may be discerned at twelve leagues' distance. The maritime arsenal is also well worthy of attention. True, there are no galley-slaves within it, as at Brest, but here all the insubordinate military from all parts of the kingdom are transferred for forced labour, and there are barracks sufficient for 1800 men. There is also a school of hydrography, and a school of naval artillery, whose vast polygon extends half a league to the west.

L'Orient has also a large and well-arranged commercial college, a preparatory school for the schools of the government, an agricultural, and divers educational societies.

There is but little to interest in the shape of manufactures, but the foreign commerce of

L'Orient, though not so flourishing as before the first revolution, is nevertheless on the increase. In 1830 there were but six merchant-vessels belonging to this port, now there are four times that number. Some of these trade to the French colonies, and had unladen their cargoes; but I learned yesterday from the most eminent ship-builder of this port, that confidence is again returning, and that the *armateurs*, or owners, have given orders, in several instances, that the vessels should be again freighted. The chief exports hence are wax, honey, butter, corn, and cattle. The small fish called sardines, or sardinias, are caught in great quantities on this part of the coast, and are sent hence to Nantes, where they are prepared, cased, and forwarded to all parts of the world. Their flavour, in my opinion, is far more exquisite when eaten fresh.

The population of this place is about 19,000, or perhaps 20,000, nearly 5000 of whom are employed in the dockyard and its appendages. In the middle of the roadstead is the Island of St. Michael, on which a *lazaret* is constructed, whence there is a most expansive view, comprising both land and water.

I have hitherto spoken of what L'Orient is as I observed it during three days of strict examination. Permit me now to state what it is about to become. During the last six weeks

directions have been given for the building of new forges; and a new *atelier de mâture* is at the moment I write nearly finished. Workshops are also in course of being erected in solid granite, for the construction of steam-engines of immense power for vessels of war; and from the durability of the materials, I should conclude that France now feels herself completely independent of England in this branch of industry.

As to sailors, they are pouring in here in profusion. Of the fifty new *compagnies permanentes d'équipages de ligne* directed to be organised by the ordinance of the 31st of August, six are destined for L'Orient. They are in part to form the crew of the Jemappes, a first-class frigate, already launched, on which more than 300 men are now working with all expedition, and which will be at sea before a fortnight. Already is the captain of this frigate arrived. I had the pleasure of seeing him yesterday, and he is certainly one of those men of whom I would say, as Frederick of Prussia said of Marshal Loudon,—"*J'aimerais mieux l'avoir à coté de moi que vis à vis.*" I would, indeed, rather have him for me than against me; and can I pay a higher compliment to a brave and accomplished sailor? The corvette, Le Berceau, and the two brigs of war, L'Alcibiade and La Peyrouse, are also nearly ready for sea with their full complements of men

of the *marins des classes*, and their captains have been on the spot for the last week or ten days superintending the operations in person.

I will conclude with the financial part of the port of L'Orient. The increase in the expense of hospitals for the past year over the preceding has been 37,424f. The value of rations now in store amounts to 115,945f., of which there is in flour, biscuits, &c., 58,688f.; wood, and store-candles, 2057f. The salaries of workmen amount to 11,576f. *per diem*. The value of the furniture of vessels now in these magazines amounts to 38,330f.; and the value of provisions, furniture, &c., aboard the vessels now afloat is 208,377f., being an increase of 64,278f. over the preceding year. The total value of every thing in the magazines, according to the inventory, is 362,653f. The total value of the *travaux du matériel naval* in appurtenances, machines, tools, &c., amounts to 4,433,676f. The value of brute substances yet to be wrought, &c., amounts to 6,352,128f. These comprise wood, metals, hemp, resinous substances, and divers other merchandises. The value of materials in a state of actual preparation amounts to 1,337,390f., and of objects already prepared, and in a state to serve for actual use, 3,215,199f. There has been delivered out for the maritime service during the year in machinery, tools, &c., to the value of 1,294,953f.; and there remains

now in the magazines for the service of the fleet for the present year, in machinery and tools, to the value of 4,433,676f.; and in raw materials, to the value of 6,352,128f., which, with various other items too numerous to mention, makes a grand total of 15,365,279f.

The quantity of oak-wood delivered out during the past year amounted to 4489 steres; of masts, beams, small pine-masts, &c., 1466 steres; of elm, beech, ash, and other woods, 116 steres; of iron-bars, 135,595 kilogrammes; of thin iron sheets, 16,740 kilogrammes; of copper, brass, bronze, &c., 40,264 kilogrammes; of lead, pewter, and zinc, 14,256 kilogrammes.

I have already remarked that L'Orient was one of the principal ports of France for the construction of vessels; and from the figures I am bout to quote, you will perceive that it stood last year next to Toulon. In 1838 the expense of workmanship on new constructions amounted to 77,637f., while the materials amounted to 390,213f., making a total of 467,850f., within nearly 150,000f. of the port of Toulon, whose cipher, for both materials and workmanship, amounted, in the naval budget of last year, to 652,140f.

During the present year, however, L'Orient exceeds Toulon and every other port of France, not only in the number of vessels constructed,

but in the value of them, as you will see by the accompanying table :—

	Vessels.		Francs.
Cherbourg in the last year constructed	8	value	3,546,036
Brest	8	——	4,354,921
Rochefort	14	——	6,900,382
Toulon	13	——	6,496,517
L'Orient	16	——	8,652,389

The *bâtimens désarmés* here are also fewer, both in number and in value, than any great port in France; but, as I have already fatigued your attention with figures, I will not enter into details.

My second and third letters on Brest will arrive in a day or two.

PORT LOUIS, MORBIHAN.

State of the Weather.—Marine Artillery continuing to Operate with the New Invented Bullet.—Alarm of the Fishermen on the Coast.—A Hint to England.—Sir James Graham.—The Fortress where Prince Louis Napoleon was confined.

Oct. 2*d*, 1840.

Since I last wrote, the rain, which had poured down almost unintermittingly for the last fortnight has ceased, and the marine artillery are again at work practising with the balls and bullets of M. Billette. The damage done to the mass of wood which represents the 74, and which lies in the direction of Belle Isle, looking from the pier of this place, is daily repaired after the exercises are over, so that they may commence anew on the next day. Several of the poor fishermen in this neighbourhood, who go out fishing for sardines, were so thunderstruck by the explosion of these deadly balls, that they fancied an invasion of the coast had in reality taken place.

While these things are going on in France, what are you doing in England? Are you wide awake as to the preparations of this great nation;

and are you determined to be prepared also, or, like children, to close your eyes against the danger, and thus hope to avert it? These are questions which ought to be asked, and which must be answered. The time for a good-natured wriggle, a loud horse-laugh, or a shrewd, sharp truism, enforced with a knowing jerk of the finger and thumb, is gone for ever. These small expedients have stood the most careless, heartless, and *insouciant* man in Europe in good stead for many a long day; but they will answer no longer; and Lord Melbourne must now soon answer to his country, in the face of Europe, for his deeds of commission and omission. As to Lord Minto, his management of the Admiralty must be openly arraigned at once. The Conservatives must no longer stand stock-still, looking on in apathy or despair, while the city is beleaguered and the enemy at the gates. A noble field of honour, in which he may win unfading honours, is opened to Sir James Graham. He must commence the attack on behalf of the wooden walls of Old England. His country, the service, the peace, the stability, the equilibrium of Europe, demand it.

I omitted in my last to remark that it was in the fortress of this town that Prince Louis Napoleon was confined. Hence he embarked for America.

BREST.

The Bagne of Brest. — Precaution for Preventing the Escape of Prisoners. — Its Cleanliness. — The Tavern for Galley-Slaves. —Severity to Galley-Slaves. — Responsibility of the Watch.—Treatment of the Slaves in Sickness.—Mortality among them.— The Word "*Forçat.*" —Men sent to the Galleys for Religious Beliefs.—Louis XIV.—Suppression of the Practice of marking the Slaves with the word "*Gal.*"—The Uniform of the Slaves. —No Beds allowed.—The Diet of the Slaves, and Severity of their Labour.—State of Crime in the Bagne.— The Extraordinary Ingenuity of the *Forçats* in Counterfeiting, &c.—Secret Police.— Horror of Visiting the Bagne. — Count de St. Hilaire Counterfeited. — Collet (his Character). — Contrefatto, the Sicilian Priest. — Cost of Articles for the Bagne. — Value of Labour of the Galley-Slaves. — The Marine Hospital at Brest. — Provisions in Store.— The Number of *Bâtimens Armés en Disponibilité et en Commission* at Brest. —Amount of Provisions. —The Officers on Board the Vessels.

Oct. 4, 1840.

The state of almost perpetual motion in which I have been for the last week has prevented me from sooner giving you those particulars concerning the Bagne of Brest which I heretofore pro-

mised, as it has also operated to preclude me from examining those financial details, the result of which I send you in the present letter.

The Bagne of Brest was constructed in 1750, by M. Choquet Lindu, an engineer of high reputation; and the object of the architect was to raise an edifice which in its distribution should unite strength, solidity, space, and airiness, so that neither the health of the *forçats* on the one hand, nor the public safety on the other, should suffer, either from the confined nature of the building, or the facilities which it presented for the escape of the galley-slaves. The site is certainly appropriately chosen. Almost in the middle of the arsenal, it is separated from it by the barracks of the marine, which, being in an elevated position, command the Bagne, and enable the marine artillery and soldiers speedily to quell any mutinous or riotous disposition, should any such shew itself. The Bagne* is 300 toises in length. It is distri-

* The word *bagne* signifies a place where slaves are confined. It is not of Turkish origin, but comes from the Italian word *bagnio*, which signifies a bath. In the prison in which the slaves of the Grand Signor are confined, at Constantinople, there are baths; and the word *bagnio* was subsequently applied in Turkey, and elsewhere, to all places in which slaves were confined, as for instances, the *bagnes* of Algiers, and Tunis, and Tripoli. In Turkey the *pertuisanier*, or *garde chiourmes*, is called *gardieu bachi*. —*Vide* PÈRE DANIEL, *Hist. de Barbarie*.

buted into six compartments, in each of which 500 men are lodged. There are two additional buildings within its precincts, wherein are lodged the keepers and police of this prison, who are always on the watch, exercising a *surveillance* which is found to be indispensable. Each of the compartments of which I have spoken contains the necessary appendages of fountains, kitchens, taverns, privy, &c. The exterior wall of the building is four feet thick, but between it and the interior one there is another wall of two feet, with an intervening corridor five feet in breadth. Beyond this corridor are placed the iron beds of the *forçats*. This precaution has been adopted to prevent them from breaking through the outer wall, a hazardous enterprise, which was sometimes successfully essayed in the olden time. Another advantage arises from this new arrangement. The *forçats*, though chained to the *tolas*, or iron bedstead, as heretofore, all the night, are now enabled, from the proximity of the *latrines*, to move to them, which anteriorly they could not do. I need not tell you that this privation not only frequently occasioned serious illness among the *forçats*, but was the cause, and perhaps the sufficing excuse, for a filth and fetidity which happily no longer exist; for now, between each bed there is a *latrine* two feet deep by two and a half, in which a plentiful supply of water may be obtained

by turning a small cock. Along the dormitories sentinels are posted during the nights, and there are besides guardians and watchmen, who regularly and almost incessantly go the rounds of the different chambers. The kitchens, which are in the middle of the compartments of which I have before made mention, are 17 feet long, 14 broad, and surrounded by an iron railing. On the other side of the kitchen is the tavern, likewise railed off and divided into two compartments. In one of these compartments is stored the munitions of wine which the government accords to the *forçat*, which amounts to a measure of two *chopines*, or a pint, daily. The other compartment is occupied by tavern-keepers of all grades, who sell to the galley-slaves such wine as either their earnings, their savings, or their private means, may enable them to drink.

In the winter months lanterns are appended to the walls of the dormitories and refectories, at a height of seven feet from the ground; and any attempt on the part of the *forçats* to extinguish these lights is considered an act of insubordination. The supervision of these unfortunate beings is confined to a body of men called *pertuisaniers*.*

* They are now called *gardes chiourmes*. It were difficult to settle the etymology of the word *pertuisaniers*. Some contend it is derived from the word *pertuisane*, a species of halberd sometimes called *parthisane*, *partisane*,

To each *pertuisanier* is confided ten *forçats*. When they go out during the day, either to labour in the arsenal, in the roadstead, or elsewhere, they are chained together two by two, and are always accompanied by the Argus-eyed *pertuisanier*. At night the chains which unite man to his fellow-man are loosened or struck off, and each individual is chained to his *tolas*, or iron bedstead. The functions of the *pertuisanier* cease as soon as the *forçat* enters the dormitory; for here the unfortunate being is transferred to a nightly watch, which supersedes the daily one, and which watch can in a moment communicate by means of sentinels posted at convenient distances with the authorities, in the event of insubordination or a tendency towards insurrection. At the extremity of each corridor there are two doors; one is a very strong wooden one with an iron wicket, the second door is of solid iron. But the precautions I have cited are not found sufficient to prevent escape. Besides the *pertuisanier* and the night-guard, there is a third officer of supervision; and, in the event of any *galérien*

partuzaine, from whence our word partisans; others hold it is derived from the old word *pertuis*. See *Ménage* and the *Dictionnaire des Trevoux*. In French, as well as in the Swiss and Spanish Infantry, there were *Pertuisaniers*, anciently spelled *partuzaniers* and *pertuzainiers*.

escaping, he is obliged to pay a certain sum for the loss of the man confided to his care.

The corridors between the sleeping apartments and the inner wall are left in a state of darkness during the evening and night; and, if I am rightly informed, not only crimes of a sanguinary and ferocious character, but often of a worse and more depraved character, are here perpetrated. It was formerly the custom to give the galley-slaves at Brest a tow mattress made by the prisoners themselves, but in 1823 this indulgence was abridged; it is alleged from the facilities which such mattresses afforded for the concealment of files and more dangerous weapons.

It would appear that any attempt at successful revolt among the slaves would be hopeless, but, nevertheless, they sometimes turn on individuals among the overseers who are deemed oppressors, and those obnoxious characters too often meet a sudden and violent death.

Though the *forçats*, when in health, have none of the comforts, and are destitute of some of the necessaries, of life, yet when in a state of sickness and disease they are received into an hospital appropriated to their use, where they experience the same medical treatment as the marine generally, and in which they are not only provided with beds, but with all the comforts which the

medical men may deem necessary for their recovery. But, notwithstanding, the mortality among these poor wretches is frightful. Such is the fatal effect of the climate, and of exposure to its sudden changes, that among 100 on the sick list, more than 80 suffer from pulmonary complaints. Many of your readers will, perhaps, inquire the meaning of the word "*forçat*." I answer, that in modern vocabulary it means one condemned for a limited period, or for life, to forced labour. In Italian, the equivalent word is *forzato*, and in Spanish, *forcado*, as contradistinguished from the *bonnevogles*, a barbarous word of the Mediterranean, which means a free labourer, and which is supposed to be a corruption of the words "*je veux bien*." Not three centuries ago men were sent to the galleys for religious belief. In 1545 an *arrêt* of the Parliament of Aix condemned 600 Vaudois for no other reason but that they were Protestants. Under the splendid despotism of Louis XIV., the condition of the *forçat*, though very lamentable, was yet ameliorated, and in 1791 and 1792 the Constituent Assembly alleviated many of the rigours of the hard lot of the *galérien;* and the labours on which these unfortunate men were employed were then, for the first time, called *travaux publics.* In 1810, under the empire, this name was changed to *travaux forcés*, but still the degrading mark of the brand "*Gal*"

was continued; and it was not until 1832, under the reign of Louis Philippe, that it was suppressed. The crimes for which delinquents are now sent to the galleys are affording lodging and succour to armed bands, coining, forgery, cheating, rape, abduction, robbery accompanied by forcible entry, personation, the manufacturing of what are called "*Lettres Circassiens de Jérusalem*," which may be freely translated humbug letters of credit on men of straw.

So soon as the *forçat* arrives at the *bagne* of his destination, he is stripped of every article of wearing apparel, and, in a word, of every thing he has in his possession, even to a snuff or tobacco-box. His clothes and effects are then committed to the flames; he is washed and sponged in a warm bath, and immediately after receives the uniform and badge or number which he is to wear during the period of his captivity. This uniform is very distinctive, and differs not only in respect to the crime but to the locality. Thus Rochefort has not the uniform of Toulon or Brest, nor has the slave condemned for five or ten years the habiliments of a man condemned for life.

After undergoing the often necessary ablution, the *galérien* is introduced to the medical officers, who, on an examination of the subject, intimate the species of labour for which the individual is fitted. The most tractable and well-behaved are

so placed that they may gain about four sous a-day, a sum which is a great resource to the greater part amongst them.

In this port, as I before observed, the *galérien* has no bed or mattress, but he receives from the Government a sort of coarse woollen covering which is called *herbage*, and which pays the quadruple debt of bed, blanket, sheet, and counterpane. Considering the labours of these unfortunate men, and the extreme humidity of the climate of Brest and L'Orient, this covering is plainly insufficient, and it is inhuman not to supply the means of additional warmth.

The diet, too, is meagre and insufficient. Meat is never given among the rations, which consist of cheese, biscuit and vegetables without seasoning, and soup, which is a decoction of salt butter, water, and black bread, the refuse and rancid remnants of vessels of the line. The severest and the most dangerous labour is chosen for the wretched being condemned for life; and the *pertuisaniers*, or *gardes chiourmes*, exercise over these doomed beings the strictest *surveillance*. The other *forçats* are chained two by two; but those who are condemned for life are bound together, and go to labour fastened by a common chain. When they return to the dormitories or refectory after labour, they are rigorously searched and chained to the benches. This gives occasion

to painful reflections. Men are not amended, but perverted, by treatment such as this; and it is therefore no wonder that the Bagne is but an *officina* of every crime and every vice, where the indifferent become bad, and the bad, unabashed and unamended, become daily worse. Notwithstanding all the strictness and severity of the *gardiens*, abominable crimes against nature, "*non nominanda inter Christianos*," are here committed. Murders sometimes occur, which can be traced to no cause but a species of jealousy arising from these infamous relations. It is also found that there is an inoculative power, so to speak, in crime. The forger learns from the thief the art of making a false key, and the thief in return is initiated into the mystery of counterfeiting signatures. Thus the Bagne is a mart of infamy and exchange of crime, where fraud and force are trucked and bartered against each other. You will deem it incredible, after the *surveillance* which I have described to you, that the *forçats* are, notwithstanding, enabled to prepare clothes for desertion, to make false keys, false passports, false letters of change, and, more extraordinary still, counterfeit money. There is also a secret police among them—a sort of Venetian Council, whose decrees are as inevitable as they are terrible. If a member of the fraternity become odious or suspected, he is quietly despatched;

lots are drawn as to who is to execute vengeance, and he who refuses is himself proscribed and punished. Sometimes one of the *gardiens* becomes a marked man, and he too often, for having strictly performed his duty, pays the penalty of his life.

On the other hand, the annals of the Bagne present traits of humanity and courage which delight and dignify the mind of man; but these instances are rare; for neither remorse, repentance, nor atonement, spring up from a treatment which shocks every manly, every generous and proper feeling. Yet, where better natures disclose themselves, there is a system of reward as there is also one of punishment.

A visit to the Bagne is a painful and a mournful study of human nature in its worst form. There are countenances within these walls whom to look on is to loathe. The sign of the beast is so naked and patent to an experienced eye, that one recoils from such monsters in human form as from defilement. On the other hand, you are often accosted by placid, benignant-looking men, who solicit you to purchase little fancy articles of their own manufacture. A most interesting history might be written of the extraordinary and infamous characters who have been for the last half century within these walls. One of the most remarkable was the Count de St. Hilaire, who

was no count at all, but counterfeited his deceased master, who died in Spain several years before. This fellow assumed the rank of a general officer, and passed regiments under review. The history of Collet, too, whom I saw and conversed with at the Bagne of Rochefort, is still more remarkable. This fellow, a stupid, uninteresting-looking being, between fifty and sixty years of age, passed himself off as a bishop, ordained priests, heard confessions, &c. His next exploit was in the character of a receiver-general, carrying away, in the most orthodox and legitimate fashion, money of a whole department. He then appeared as military inspector, the inspector of *ponts et chaussées*, and assumed various other disguises not less remarkable. In fact, he represented church, army, navy, finance, each in its turn. I dare say in the end he would have counterfeited the character of cabinet minister; and perhaps he may yet, for his term is drawing to a close. He looks the part to admiration; being down-visaged, dull, and somewhat demure of aspect; in fact, he is the very counterpart of the Marquess of —— in appearance and manner. But Collet is certainly the brighter and more ingenious man of the two.

There are some priests here for infamous crimes; and Contrefatto, the Sicilian, was formerly of the number. He became an object of

such curiosity, that the attendants received orders not to point him out to strangers.

I doubt that the labours of the *forçats* are any where profitable; they certainly do not pay the expense of their keep at Brest. M. Venuste Gleizes, the commissary of the Bagne, has published some very interesting details on this subject, in a pamphlet distributed to his private friends, but I am not allowed to make extracts from it. I have no hesitation, however, in saying that 900 free labourers, *i. e.* one-fourth the number of the galley-slaves (for they are 3641), would perform more work in any given number of days than the whole *bagne* put together.

The Bagne of Brest is the most considerable of the three *bagnes* of France, for there is no establishment of *forçats*, in the proper sense of the term, at L'Orient or Cherbourg. The cost of the articles consumed in the *bagnes* of France for the past year is as follows:—Brest, 608,239f. 23c.; Rochefort, 172,059f. 96c.; Toulon, 391,989f. 21c.: giving a diminution on the expenses of the preceding year of 33,911f. 66c. The sum paid as wages to the *forçats* of the whole kingdom amounted, in the last budget, to 12,563f. 37c.; and the cost of capture of runaways (for the retaking of whom within the town in which the *bagne* is, a premium of 25f., and without, a premium of 100f., is given) to 4631f. 72c.

The value of the labour of the galley-slaves is

as follows: — Brest, 140,644f. 90c.; Rochefort, 90,279f. 68c.; Toulon, 98,612f. 58c.

The Marine Hospital at Brest is valued at 1,439,571f. 92c.; the provisions in store, at 1,538,875f. 90c.; the *travaux du matériel naval*, at 92,286,153f.; the *travaux de l'artillerie*, 20,029,356f.; the *travaux hydrauliques*, 28,953,188f.; the *matériel* of the *sciences et arts maritimes*, 143,029f.; making a total of 144,530,820f.; a greater amount by 12,000,000f. than is contained in any of the other four French arsenals.

A number of *bâtimens armés en disponibilité ou en commission* at Brest during the past year, amounted to fifty-eight, the value of the *matériel* of the armament or equipment of which was 3,680,438f.; an amount, in number and value, which was only exceeded by Toulon.

In the manufacture of what are called *appareaux machinés et outils*, Brest stands foremost. There remain now in the magazines articles of this nature to the value of 5,641,029f.; while there was sent out for the use of the fleet a quantity equal to 1,604,465f. In the *denrées* and *utensiles* existing aboard the *bâtimens armés*, Brest is almost foremost in the scale; the amount of provisions for the last year representing a value of 825,314f., and of *utensiles*, 32,642f.; total, 857,957f.

These figures are very wearisome, but they

must be stated, in order to give the reader an idea of the extent and magnitude of the *port militaire*. For the rest, Brest is a most uninteresting place, with the vilest of all bad climates; and at the present moment there is a mistrust and a chilling coldness exhibited towards strangers, and especially towards English, which renders the very name of the place odious to me. The officers on board the vessels in the *rade* are of the best specimen of French tars; and they have my warm wishes for their health, happiness, and professional promotion. In my next letter I shall speak of Nantes, Indret, La Rochelle, and Rochefort.

ROCHEFORT.

Departure from L'Orient.—Change of Climate.—The Loire.—La Roche Bernard.—Iron Bridge similar to the Chain Pier at Brighton.—Journey to Nantes.—Nantes attacked by the English.—Delivered by Anne of Brittany and Charles VIII.—Carrier and the Civil War.—Republican Marriages.—Carrier put in Accusation by the National Convention.—Extent of Nantes and Site.—The Quay.—The River, and the Vessels thereon.—Vessels sent out of Nantes.—Ideas of War.—Henry IV.'s Edict in favour of the Protestants.—Madame de Sevigné.—Duchess of Berri.—Manufactories and Distilleries of Nantes.—Indret.—Its Establishment.—Independence of France as regards Steamers.—The Foundery.—Preparations for fitting out Steamers.—Progress at Indret between 1838 and 1839.—Value of Steam Boilers.—Departure from Indret.—La Vendée.—Arrival at La Rochelle.—Its Harbour.—The Town.—The Hôtel-de-Ville.—The Room in which Henry IV. slept.—The Trade.—Pontard de Treuilcharis.—St. Bartholomew.—Biron and Anjou.—Courage of the Inhabitants in 1572.—Louis XIII. and Richelieu.—Guiton.—Metezeau bars the Entrance to the Harbour with an immense Dyke.—Famine of the Inhabitants.—Surrender of La Rochelle.—The Protestants.—Fortified by Louis XIV.—Departure and Arrival at Rochefort.—(*See next Chapter.*)

Oct. 7, 1840.

I LEFT L'Orient a few days ago, and proceeded by way of Hennebon, Vannes, La Roche Bernard,

and La Croix Blanche, to Nantes. At La Roche Bernard, where you enter from Morbihan into the Loire Inférieure, the climate visibly changes. The fogs, vapours, and humidity of the departments of Finisterre and Morbihan in great part disappear; and the Loire, stretching out before you its sluggish and muddy waters, giving token of the rich soil through which it flows, and bearing on its bosom barks freighted with grapes, butter, wine, and corn, also proclaims that you are about to enter a land flowing with milk and honey. The situation of La Roche Bernard is very beautiful. You cross the river over an iron bridge, of a light and elegant construction, very much resembling the chain-pier at Brighton, and change horses at a nice inn without the town, whence you have a view of the river.

The journey hence to Nantes is performed in about seven hours by the common diligence; but it is easily accomplished in five hours by the post.

Nantes is, as you are aware, a rich and handsome maritime city, whose origin is lost in the night of time. In the fifth century it sustained a siege of sixty days against the Huns; and in the ninth it fell three times into the power of the Normans, who ravaged the country with fire and sword.

Attacked by the English, it was delivered in

1380 by the Constable Olivier de Clisson; and re-united with the whole province of the Loire Inférieure to the Crown in 1491, by the marriage of Anne of Brittany with Charles VIII. The loss of the French West India colonies, and the revolt of the slaves of St. Domingo, materially injured the growing prosperity of this town, Nantes; and the wars of La Vendée, which followed in quick succession, had well-nigh accomplished its ruin. This is not the place nor the occasion to enter into the horrible details of that frightful civil war which gained for Carrier a hideous immortality. The Noyades of Nantes and her republican marriages stand out in hateful and unenviable prominence, even in the annals of French revolutionary bloodthirstiness. Carrier was at length put in accusation by the National Convention. Even the gorge of Légendre, whom Burke calls the legislative butcher, rose at the crimes of this monster in human form, and he eloquently exclaimed, in speaking on the question, "*Vous me demandez des preuves? faites donc refluer la Loire.*"

As you approach Nantes, you are struck with its site as well as its extent. The quay of the foss is full half a league in length. It is shaded by magnificent trees, planted at regular distances, before warehouses and magazines filled with the produce of the colonies. The river is

crowded with ships of all nations, but principally from the north of Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and Russia. The vessels come freighted with timber, hemp, tallow, &c., and carry back the brandies and wines of France. Before the first revolution, the commerce of Nantes, as I before observed, was much more considerable; she then was remarkable for the construction of beautiful and quick-sailing vessels, and her general commerce yielded in extent and importance to none of the cities of France. Now, however, Havre and Marseilles stand far above her, and more vessels are constructed at Bordeaux. Indeed, Nantes is no longer remarkable for what the French sailors called the *fins voiliers*. There are now eight small vessels in the stocks, principally intended for the cod and whale-fisheries, which are carried on with unabated zeal and success. Nantes also sends out 200 vessels in what are called *voyages au long cours*. But these are all of small tonnage, for ships of very large burden cannot come up to the town, the nature of the bed of the river being an impediment; they consequently unload their cargoes at Paimbœuf. The late rumours of war, as well as the apprehension of that calamity, have operated to injure the trade of Nantes. As at Havre, many vessels have been unladen, while others have given up long voyages as a hazardous, if not a hopeless,

speculation. Within the last week, some *armateurs* have plucked up new courage; but having come to the "sticking-place," sailors are not to be found in the abundance in which they existed two months ago. In fact, the government have laid their hands on all disposable talent in this way to such an extent, that 183 fathers of families, some of them having two, and others three and four children, have disappeared, constrained to form a portion of the crews of the *équipages de ligne* in the *ports militaires*. Ideas of war are, therefore, neither popular nor, I may add, prevalent among the commercial classes, whether high or low. Even the commonest twopenny-halfpenny dealer exclaims to his neighbour, talking over recent affairs, "*Toutes ces demonstrations, la Mazette* n'aboutiront à rien;*" while the higher and more educated look on the recent proceedings as one of those legerdemain tricks in which the left-handed wisdom of the cunning are so unwise as to indulge.

Nantes is, historically, a very remarkable place. It was here, in 1598, that Henry IV. issued that famous edict in favour of the Protestants, which, unfortunately for France, was afterwards revoked by Louis XIV. in 1685. Beyond the suburbs of the town is the Château de

* An exclamation of the common people of Nantes.

Buron, celebrated as having been the dwelling of Madame de Sevigné. The room she inhabited, like that of Voltaire at Ferney, is religiously preserved. There is also another room in the town which is not now visited as it was eight years ago—I mean the chamber in which the Duchess de Berri was taken prisoner; for though Nantes is the head-quarters of Carlism, still the enthusiasm for the Duchess of Berri seems, and it is not extraordinary, to have died altogether away. As to myself, as a passing stranger, I will freely admit that I took no interest at all in the subject, though I visited with all speed the château of the Rochejacquelins, which is nearly opposite the cathedral.

Nantes possesses considerable manufactures; among others, of cotton, printed cloths, and cambric pocket-handkerchiefs. There are also several brandy distilleries.

You may suppose that I did not arrive so near to Indret without visiting a place which seems destined to become the first considerable establishment in France for the construction of steam-engines for the purpose of navigation.

The actual condition of the relations between England and France, as well as the developement which has recently been given in this country to steam navigation, seem to have impressed on the government the necessity of rendering this king-

dom no longer tributary to England in all that concerns the machinery of steam-boats.

With this view it may be therefore supposed it was, that the French government determined on creating an establishment at Indret, exclusively devoted to steam navigation. Already there are six *ateliers* in existence; the *atelier* of the foundery, of the models and joinery, of the forges, of the *ajustage*, of the *montage*, and of the *chaudronnerie*.

The foundery is spacious and well arranged. The octagon workshop in which ships' guns were formerly cast is now converted into a room in which the cylinders of steam-engines are prepared. In these different workshops about 420 men are employed: in the forges are 36 large fires. Here machines of 160 horse-power are made, and about 100 workmen are engaged. The *atelier* of *ajustage* also occupies about 100 workmen. In the *chaudronnerie*, in which the boilers of steamers are prepared, 80 workmen are employed.

The workmen are at present engaged on the machines of the Gassendi, of 220 horse-power; of the Brandon, of 160, now fitting out at L'Orient; and of a new species of machine of 60 horse-power, destined for a steamer on the Senegal station.

Constituted as the *usine* of Indret at present

is, it can turn out the machinery for three steamers of from 160 to 220 horse-power in the year; but at this very moment, measures are being taken to complete the machinery for twelve steamers of 450 horse-power in the same space of time. These preparations are now proceeding with incessant activity, and it is calculated they will be finished in eighteen months. The sum accorded in the budget last year for Indret was only 700,000 f.; but the sum has been raised this year to 2,000,000f.; and it must be considerably augmented in 1841, for there are three times as many artificers employed now as there were in 1839.

There are five *chantiers*, or slips, at Indret. In one of these is the Gassendi, of 220 horse-power; in another the Rapide, of 80, intended as a towing-boat for the fleet at Cherbourg. Both these vessels are on the point of being launched. There will then be four disposable stocks, in which four new vessels, of 220 horse-power each, and destined for the service of the colonies, will be placed.

Four marine engineers permanently reside at Indret—namely, a director, a sub-director, and two subordinate engineers. A surgeon also lives within the dockyard; and certainly he has no sinecure, for the number of workmen is now more than 900, and he has to attend them all.

I do not know whether Lord Minto is aware of the establishment at Indret, or of the progress making there. It is, perhaps, of little moment whether he be or not; but it is of main consequence that the people of England should be informed of the strides making by rivals who may become enemies at no distant day. Far am I from blaming the French government or the French people. If they be asked for explanations on this point, they may reply in the words of a king's speech, drawn up by Walpole,* delivered October 19, 1721, and which was not only praised by the celebrated Spanish economist Ustariz,† but justified by one of the most enlightened of French publicists—I mean Forbonnais. The words of the speech are "the supplying, ourselves with naval stores upon terms the most easy and least precarious seems highly to deserve the attention of Parliament." If the words "steam machines" be inserted for "naval stores," and now they are almost convertible terms, the parallel becomes perfect. I do not charge wilful corruption, or wilful error, on the Minto and Elliot clique and their subordinates in the House of Commons. I have the high authority of Mr. Fox for saying it is not necessary. In February, 1782, in attacking the naval

* See Coxe's *Walpole*, vol. i. p. 284.

† *Theory and Practice of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 131.

administration of Lord Sandwich (see Speeches, vol. 2), that great man said, "There was no occasion to criminate a minister; it was sufficient that he was incapable, unfortunate, or disliked;" and on the occasion of this very debate Pitt voted with his rival against the naval administration of Lord Sandwich.

The following is a comparative account of the relative difference in the progress at Indret, between the years 1838 and 1839, as contained in the budget of 1840, relatively to the *appareils* for the machinery of steamers of 220 horse-power:—

The value of the *cylindres à vapeur condenseurs, pompes à air plaques de fondation*, &c. made on the 1st of January, 1838, was 96,805f. 43c., while on the 1st of January, 1839, there had been fabricated to the value of 169,758f. 8c.

The value of steam-boilers, &c., ready on the 1st of January, 1838, amounted to 170,513f. 22c., and on the 1st of January, 1839, to 195,699f. 53c.

The total of *menuiserie* now in store amounts to 14,813f. 54c.; of *fonderie*, to 113,317f. 24c.; of *chaudronnerie*, 69,715f. 43c.; of *ajustage*, 329,340f. 36c.; of *montage*, 396,773f. 68c.; making a grand total of 995,435f. 37c.

On Monday, the 5th of October, I left Indret before daybreak for Rochefort, and within two hours was in the heart of La Vendée. Passing

through a fine and thickly wooded country, and merely stopping to relay at Bourbon Vendée, Mareuil Lucon, Marans, and Groland, I arrived at La Rochelle about two o'clock in the afternoon.

Rochelle has an admirable commercial position. The town forms, as it were, the bottom of a small gulf, which serves as an *avant port*. It is defended by two handsome towers, which, whether La Rochelle be approached by land or water, are seen at an immense distance. Opposite the town, at the extremity of the roadstead, are the isles of Re and Oleron. The harbour is safe and commodious; it is protected by a strong jetty, and is capable of receiving vessels of 400 or 500 tons burden. There has recently been created a dock, or *arrière port*, where vessels are careened. The town itself is clean and well built; and in the Hôtel-de-Ville is shewn the room in which Henry IV. slept. The trade of La Rochelle is extensive, not only in wines and brandies, but in wood, iron, salt, cheese, butter, oil, sardines, and colonial produce. While under the power of the English, La Rochelle obtained numerous privileges, which not only tended to increase her commerce, but her freedom. During the wars of religion, Protestantism made great progress, and in 1568 Pontard de Treuilcharis, who had embraced the reformed faith, was elected mayor. He delivered

the town to the Prince of Condé, who rendered it one of the most formidable bulwarks of the power of his party. After the massacre of St. Bartholomew, it became the principal refuge of the Protestants; and was, in consequence, invested, in 1572, by the Dukes of Biron and Anjou. Both the attack and defence were long and terrible. The horrors of famine did not shake the courage of the inhabitants; and, after eight months of continued struggles, and an immense expenditure, the besiegers, who had fruitlessly lost more than 25,000 men, and a great number of brave officers, concluded with the Rochellois a treaty which left them in possession of their town and country. The numerous infractions of that treaty in the reign of Louis XIII., and under the ministry of Richelieu, led to a second siege, which commenced the 10th of August, 1627, and which was as violent, longer, and more decisive than the former. The inhabitants, determined to exhibit the most strenuous resistance, elected one Guiton mayor, who, standing on the steps of the Hôtel-de-Ville, with a naked dagger in his hand, cried aloud to his fellow-citizens, "I consent to be mayor only on one condition, namely, that I shall be at liberty to plunge this dagger in the breast of the first who talks of surrender. Should I think of capitulating myself, I hope this very instrument may be used against

me, and I ask permission solemnly to lay it on the table of an assembly for that purpose." The King, the Duke of Orleans, Marshal Bassompière, and all the most renowned generals of the time, were present at the siege. The circumvallation extended for three leagues around the town. It was thus impossible that provisions could enter on the land side; but the sea was then, as let us hope, notwithstanding the "baleful dominion" (to use an expression of Joseph Hume) of the Whigs, it will ever be, open to our countrymen; and our vessels poured in provisions and ammunition. After six months of heroical resistance, during which no thought of surrendering entered the minds of the inhabitants, the famous architect and engineer Metezeau was directed to bar the entrance of the harbour by an immense dyke, of which the remains are seen to this day at low water. This gigantic undertaking, extending 1500 metres into the sea, was accomplished, and the result was soon fatally apparent. Provisions and munitions of war no longer arrived; and the inhabitants, reduced to the last extremity, fed on herbs and shell-fish. Famine quickly decimated the ranks of the besieged, and in an incredibly short time 12,000 died from absolute famine. After a siege of fourteen months and eighteen days La Rochelle at length capitulated.

Richelieu made a triumphant entry into the deserted and prostrate city, the fortifications were demolished, the Protestants were deprived of their stronghold and last place of refuge, the inhabitants disarmed and taxed, the shrievalty and corporation for ever abolished, and La Rochelle, a heap of ruins, became as submissive to the Grand Cardinal as the remainder of *la belle France*. But it was a conquest for which his eminence paid dearly, for it cost no less a sum than 40,000,000f.

Louis XIV., wisely considering the importance of the place, caused it again to be fortified by Vauban, and it remains to the present day a striking monument of his genius.

On Tuesday, the 6th of October, I entered Rochefort, but that *port militaire* is too important to despatch in a few lines at the end of a long letter. I shall, therefore, write again, possibly from Bordeaux on Friday, the 9th.

ROCHEFORT.

Rochefort.—The City.—The Population.—Situation of the City.—The Harbours.—No Stranger admitted unless by Order.—Great Difficulty of obtaining Admission to the French Dockyards.—Vice-Consul of England at Brest.—Elegant Entrance to the Port.—A Saw-Mill.—The *Atelier des Tours à Métaux*.—The Sail-Loft and Sail-Makers.—The *Atelier de Sculpture*.—The Model-Room.—Barbotin.—The Bagne (not entered without an Order).—Collet (*See Letter from Brest*).—The *Forçats*.—The Beds.—Difference in the *Forçats* of L'Orient and other Galley-Slaves.—M. Hyde de Neuville.—The *Magasin Général*.—The *Chantier des Vaisseaux*.—Vessels on the Stocks.—The Cranes of the Dockyard.—Rope-making at Rochefort.—The Anchors, Bullets, &c.—The *Magasin des Subsistances*.—Making of Biscuits.—The Founderies.—Mons. Hubert.—Preparations of Steam-Engines for Vessels of War.—Hints to England. The Naval Hospital.—*Sœurs Hospitaliers de St. Vincent de Paule*.—The Vicomte de Jurien.—Marine Artillery.—Contracts.—2d *Regiment d'Infanterie de Marine*.—Mons. Rollet.—Mons. Bernard.—Details. The Value of Provisions.—The Amount of Provisions in Store.—The Commerce of Rochefort.—The Ship-Builders of the Town.

Oct. 10, 1840.

ROCHEFORT is too important a place not to require a separate and distinct letter, and this was one among the reasons which induced me not

to treat of it *par parenthèse*. It is a large, handsome, and strong maritime city, in the department of the Charante Inférieure, with a Maritime Prefecture, Tribunals of Commerce and of *Première Instance*, a school of hydrography of the second class, as well as a school of medicine. The population exceeds 17,000 souls. The city is situate at the extremity of a large plain, on the right bank of the Charante, about four leagues from the Atlantic. Rochefort is the third *port militaire* of France. There is 20 feet of water in the harbour at low-watermark, and more than 40 at high tide. The largest vessels are afloat, whether in high or low water. There is also a mercantile harbour separated from the *port militaire* which is capable of receiving vessels from 800 to 900 tons.

No stranger is at any time allowed to visit the arsenal of Rochefort, unless he obtains a permission delivered at the Etat Major-Général de la Marine. In ordinary times this permission is obtained by the exhibition of a passport *visé* at the Mayoralty, or by a certificate of the police attesting that the passport has been deposited at the Bureau de la Police; but at the present moment you may present your passport at the Bureau de la Police from 10 to 11, and from 2 to 3, and on the next day appear with it before the Etat Général de la Marine; but these formalities, troublesome and

onerous at all times, will now avail you nothing, and unless you have some stronger recommendation you will be refused admittance. I know not on whom to affix the blame of this most inhospitable, unnecessary, and impolitic regulation. At the Etat-Major they refer you to the Admiral, and the Admiral boldly says, he receives his instructions from Paris. This I firmly believe to be the case, for three reasons,—1st, because the Préfets Maritimes are all admirals and gentlemen, and therefore incapable of gross lying; 2dly, because they one and all admit that these precautions are stupid, as well as unnecessary, for there is nothing to be seen in any of the French dockyards which was not known years and years ago; and 3dly, because they are one and all men long in the habit of command, accustomed to the exercise of authority, and to whom the granting of a permission was heretofore a pleasure. Not so, however, with the the race of adventurers, who to-day are ministers, and to-morrow nothing. "Dressed in a little brief authority" they play their "fantastic tricks," but soon they "strut and fret their hour," and then sink into the oblivion from which they originally sprung. I have a double object in making these remarks. In the first place, I but repeat the indignant observations of that enlightened body of gentlemen, the French navy, who scorn as they spurn the base practices of unworthy and tricky

men; and, in the second place, I but reiterate the indignant complaints of my own countrymen, who know that we have been the faithful ally of this nation for the last ten years—who are aware that we were the first promptly to acknowledge the Monarch of the Revolution ere the seeds of his stability were yet sown, and who feel—poignantly feel, that this is a most ungracious return to an ally, to a fast and firm friend when friends were few, and to a neighbour whose dockyards, as whose shores, "free as the air," are open to all the world.

Personally I make no complaint. I have entered every arsenal in France, and minutely examined what is going on, but I know that many of my countrymen have not only been rudely refused, but in some instances their motives more than questioned. This might certainly be forgiven in an *employé* of the French government, but when a subordinate creature, such for instance as the Vice-Consul of England at Brest (a Frenchman by birth, and Frenchmen be it said, *en passant*, unless they are well-bred and well-educated, are more disagreeable than the vulgar and the low-minded of other nations), presumes to question the motives of Englishmen generally, and to arraign the policy of a nation whose pay he pockets, he ought forthwith to be discharged. I know not whether the appointment be made by

Lord Palmerston, or by the Consul, M. Perier, who is universally popular; but in any event, I repeat, the Vice-Consul is not in any season, and least of all now, a fit person to serve England, and he should be displaced either to give precedence to a competent native Englishman, or a Frenchman who would have the sense and the decency to forbear from vilipending the ministers who appointed him, and basely calumniating the nation whose bread he eats.

Enough on this subject.

The *port militaire* of Rochefort is entered only by means of a *carte d'entrée*, which is deposited with one of the corps de garde of the maritime gend'armerie. You enter by a very elegant gate called the Porte du Soleil, constructed in 1828, at either side of which are lodges where the corps de garde of the gend'armerie and the agents in the *surveillance* of the port, as well as some Custom-house officers, are placed. The first remarkable object is a sawing-mill, which is capable of sawing the largest pieces of wood. The machinery is so ingeniously contrived that the wood moves towards the saw, and so simple that one man is sufficient to regulate the movement of the machine.

The *atelier des tours à métaux* is also remarkable. Brass, iron, copper, and wood, are here turned, polished, pierced, drilled, and modelled

into a hundred different forms. This is all done by means of one steam-engine, which animates, and, as it were, gives life to twenty different operations. The turning machines and the workmen engaged on them are placed in two ranks along the length of the *atelier;* behind them are the *ajusteurs,* or finishers, who unite the separate pieces and adjust them to each other. At the end of this *salle* are several machines invented by M. Hubert, director of naval constructions, which merit attention. By one of these the *mortaise,* or joint of a block, is made in two minutes with wonderful precision and exactness. This formerly nearly required half-a-day of a workman's time. There is also a *machine à gournables,* or for trendles, in which an irregular and crooked block of wood becomes in a minute as straight as an arrow.

The *voilerie,* or sail loft, will also well repay the trouble of a visit.

The *poumelles,* or sailmaker's palms or dists, are of an improved construction, of which, doubtless, Lord Minto in the one house, and Mr. O'Ferrall (!) in the other, will be able to give a detailed description.

The *atelier de sculpture,* where the external ornaments of ships of war are chiselled out, is next visited. Formerly Rochefort was celebrated for colossal figures representing gods and heroes for

the stems of ships, but now it has been discovered that these colossal masses not only injure the speed, but detract from the strength and solidity of the vessel. They are therefore made on a much smaller scale than heretofore. The model-room adjoins the *atelier de sculpture*. Here are models of every machine and vessel in the dock-yard, and among the rest a recently invented stopping machine, to be applied to steamers, the invention of MM. Bechameil and Legoff. Here also is shewn the capstern of Barbotin, an attempt made at perpetual motion by a *forçat* of that name, who founded on its success the hope—need I say the vain hope?—of obtaining his liberty.

The Bagne is but a step from the model-room. In order to enter it you must obtain the permission of the commissary of galley-slaves (*commissaire des chiourmes*). There are now beds sufficient to receive 1000 prisoners. While I was visiting the establishment, the famous Collet, of whom I sent you some slight account in a letter from Brest, passed by. His term of imprisonment is drawing fast to a close, and, as it is well known he is unreformed, he is doubtless meditating some new deception to astonish his dupes. Two pieces of artillery are planted at the entrance of the Bagne. They are loaded with case shot, and as the *forçats* proceed to and return to their labour,

the cannoneers stand by these guns with lighted matches in hand, and all the guard is under arms. Here, as at Brest, the *forçats* tempt you with imploring looks to buy their little wares in cocoa wood, bone, ivory, and hair, and the humane traveller seldom hesitates to select some small object.

At the Bagne of Rochefort, as well as at the Bagne of Toulon, there are too many *forçats* in each *salle*, and the beds are also too close to each other. Here, however, is practised a system of rewards in reference to the slaves, which is found to work with happy effect. These rewards consist in unchaining the slave for a time, in accoupling him with lighter irons, &c.

There are also additional punishments, which consist in the deprivation of wine, the use of the *garcette*, &c. These punishments are inflicted for theft, insubordination, attempts at or making disguises to facilitate escape, &c. There is a marked difference between the *forçats* of L'Orient and the other galley-slaves, as at L'Orient none are condemned to the Bagne but soldiers for insubordination. Drunkenness is a prevailing vice at L'Orient, but theft is rare. Here, however, both theft and drunkenness prevail, as well as the more odious vice of informing against each other, which is unknown among the soldiers condemned to the *travaux forcés* at L'Orient. I ought to state, to the credit of a gen-

tleman with whom I was formerly acquainted—I mean M. Hyde de Neuville—that when Minister of Marine he materially ameliorated the condition of the *forçats* in the *ports militaires*.

The *Magasin-Général* contains every thing necessary for the arming and provisioning ships of war. It is remarkably clean and well arranged. There is here, as at the *Usine d'Indret*, of which I sent you an account some days ago, a *chantier* specially dedicated to the construction of steam-boats. Two are now on the stocks of 220 horse-power, and of the length of a 90 gun ship; and preparations are being made, with great activity, to get on the stocks four additional ones of 440 horse-power, which I beg to state are not to be made of "pasteboard."

The *Chantier des Vaisseaux* is well worthy of attention. There are now on the stocks the Ulm and the Duguesclin of 90 and 100 guns; the three-decker, the Louis XIV., and the City of Paris of 120 guns; the Semiramis of 60 guns; and the Turenne of 100 guns. All these vessels are in so forward a state as to be capable of being launched by the 1st of January, 1841.

The *grues de déchargement*, or cranes, in this dock-yard are of immense power. I saw one of them raise sixty barrels of wine, the weight of which was estimated at 30,000lb. Four men only were engaged in this operation.

The *corderie* is two stories high and 250 toises long, and cables are here made of 200 toises in length.

Rochefort has a repute in cable and rope-making unequalled in France.

The *Parc aux Ancres* is exceedingly well disposed. The anchors are symmetrically arranged according to their weight. The largest weigh 5500 kilogrammes. In the *Parc d'Artillerie* are about 1800 cannons, carronades, and obuses. Some of these weigh as much as 4000 kilogrammes. Bullets, balls, bombs, and case shot, are here also ranged in regular order.

The *Magasin des Subsistances* is an immense building, in which are manufactured and stored all the provisions necessary for the use of the marine in this port. The navy biscuits, which were formerly kneaded with the feet, are now made without even the assistance of the hand. A large circular kneading trough receives the flour from an upper story, when a spigot from below gives as much warm water as is necessary; the dough is then kneaded, mixed, and receives its form by the aid of machinery, which not only fashions the biscuit into an oval form, but transfers it alternately to the baking and browning oven. Rochefort is allowed a superiority over all the other ports of France in the manufacture of biscuit.

There is now more activity in the *fonderies* than in any other department of the port of Rochefort. Immense machinery, and which certainly justifies the appellation of *grandiose*, which my *planton*, or guide, bestowed on it, is in course of construction with a view to the fabrication of steam-engines for vessels of war under the direction of M. Hubert. The object is, and it is openly avowed, to render France wholly independent of England in this particular.

I pray you to take note of these preparations, coupled with what is actually doing at Indret, and to call to it the special attention of the people of England. Meanwhile what are we doing? Are we even securing our ships and our dockyards against the incendiary? Are we freely admitting strangers to Chatham, Woolwich, and Portsmouth, when Englishmen are rigorously excluded from Brest, Rochefort, and Toulon?

The Naval Hospital attached to Rochefort seems to be admirably conducted. There are beds for 1200 patients; and this is not too much when the unhealthy nature of the locality is taken into account.

If any thing could reconcile one to endure the absurd mummeries of Popery it would be the zeal and unwearying attention which the Sœurs Hospitalières de St. Vincent de Paule bestow on

the sick and dying. These admirable women will have their reward in another world.

The Préfet Maritime at Cherbourg is Admiral Le Blanc, and the Commissaire de la Marine, M. la Vicomte de Jurien, son, I believe, of the admiral of that name, who, if I mistake not, was at Algiers in 1819 with Captain Fremantle. To the Vicomte de Jurien, a young gentleman of polished manners, enlightened views, and wholly destitute of absurd national prejudices, I tender the expression of my warmest thanks. Though he was engaged on important public business, he left it to accompany me over a portion of the port.

Since I have been here an additional company of marine artillery has arrived; and I understand that workmen in the dockyard are to be increased by one-half the number at present engaged.

On the 1st of this month a contract was signed for the delivery of 1500 *litres* of *eau de vie, de* 52 *degrés centesimaux;* and to-day a contract will be entered into for drugs, medicines, &c., for the service of the hospitals for a period of three years, counting from the 1st of May, 1841.

On Monday next contracts will be entered into for fresh meat, candles, wood, fagots, and coals, and all these are on a large scale.

On Thursday next the 2d Regiment d'Infanterie de Marine, being a portion of the corps at Rochefort, will proceed to adjudicate according to the advertisement published in the *Rochefortin*, a copy of which I send you:—

"AVIS.

"Le 15 Octobre prochain, à deux heures de relevée, il sera procédé, dans la Salle de Réunion du Conseil d'Administration du dit corps (Petite Place de la Marine), à l'adjudication sur soumissions cachetées, de la fourniture des objets ci-après, nécessaires à la dite portion du régiment, savoir:—

"300 matelas, à une place.

"300 traversins, à une place.

"300 sommiers, à une place.

"900 paires de draps, à une place.

"300 fonçures de lit, à une place.

"600 havre-sacs garnis avec grandes courroies et planchettes."

It is for you and your readers to say whether these things betoken war. I have my own opinion on the subject, but after all it is but conjectural, and it is far safer to relate facts than to speculate, be it never so well.

M. Rollet, the Director des Vivres at this port, has been suddenly called to Paris by the Minister of Marine, in order to confer with his superior on the best mode of provisioning the fleet in a short time. He is expected back in a day or two, but

by that time I shall be on my way to Toulon and Marseilles, and cannot therefore have an opportunity of conferring with him, which I very much regret. I have had the pleasure of meeting at every port which I have hitherto visited M. Bernard, Inspecteur-Général des Travaux Hydrauliques, now on a tour of inspection. Having had the advantage of meeting M. Bernard twice in society at Brest, I wish to bear this public testimony to his ability, intelligence, and sincere desire for a good understanding between the two countries. I hope it may be my fortune again to meet this gentleman at Toulon.

It now only remains for me to enter into a few financial details. They are tedious and uninteresting, but necessary, and I pray you to bear with me while I get quickly over them. The value of provisions in the port of Rochefort at the commencement of last year was 1,058,788f. 65c. During the year there was delivered out to the amount of 910,380f. 85c., and there remained in store at the end of the year to the value of 372,398f. 86c.

Of *Main-d'œuvre et matières employés dans les fabrications*, there was of *cerćales* to the value of 158,839f. 45c., of *viande en cheville* to the value of 87,703f. 30c.

Of *mobilier et utensiles à l'usage des bureaux, des magasins, et des bâtimens armés*, there existed

at the end of the last year to the value of 129,209f. 71c.

The amount of provisions in store at the end of the present financial year is considerably greater than it was in the past. In 1838 the value was 487,068f.; in 1839, 630,225f.

In *apparaux machines outils* the proportion is in an inverse ratio. Last year it amounted to 4,685,736f., while in the present it amounts only to 3,460,221f.

The value of the *objets confectionnés en état de servir* at the beginning of the past year amounted to 5,532,458f.; at the conclusion of the year the amount was only 4,074,560f.

On the whole, however, this is the third *port militaire* of France, Brest and Toulon standing in the first and second ranks.

For the rest, this place has little commerce; the principal trade is in corn, wines, salt, brandies, &c. The shipbuilders of the mercantile port have some renown. They send out very smart and "trim-built" vessels for the coasting trade and cod-fishery. The shoulder of mutton sail is very prevalent, more especially in the small vessels which fish for sardines.

MARSEILLES.

The Roads and Vehicles.—Bordeaux.—The Gascon Race.—The People of Bordeaux.—The *Commis Voyageur*, his Character.—The Marseillaise.—The Priest and *Sous-Officier*.—Monsieur Thiers.—Monsieur Guizot.—Lord Palmerston.—Processions at Brives.—The "Chant du Départ."—Rumours of War.—Colonial Trade.—Application to the Minister of Marine for Letters of Marque.—Number of Vessels at Bordeaux.—Departure from Bordeaux for Toulouse.—Perturbed State of the Population.—Departure from Toulouse.—Arrival at Marseilles.—Introduction into Gaul of the Olive and Vine by the Inhabitants.—The Fisheries.—The Position and Commercial Relations of Marseilles.—Forms and Habitudes of the Natives.—The Religion.—Henry IV.—Louis XIV. 1660.—Foundation of the Bastile.—Plague.—The Number of Vessels which Entered the Harbour in 1760.—The Number of Vessels Outward Bound same Year.—The Exportations, 1783 to 1792, and Importations.—Their Value.—The Conquest of Algiers.—Number of Vessels Entered at Marseilles from 1825 to 1831.—The Population in 1832.—The Number of Vessels Going Out during same Years.—The Revenue of the Customs.—Principal Inhabitants against War.—Number of Vessels belonging to the Port in 1830.—The Harbour.—The City.—The Houses.—The Climate.—The People.—The Language.—Their Dances (Ancient).—Their Fête Dieu.—Departure from Marseilles.

Oct. 10, 1840.

I HAVE been in some sort the personification of perpetual motion since I last wrote to you,

and this will in a measure account for my long silence.

While the body is tossed about night and day over wretched roads in lumbering vehicles, it is difficult to collect together the scattered thoughts of the wayworn traveller. I proceeded from Rochefort to Bordeaux. That dull, but magnificent city is so well known to the English in general, that any description of it, or of the manners and customs of the inhabitants, would be tedious as a twice-told tale. The emptiness, the alternate froth and fury of the Gascon, are well known; but never did these qualities appear among the lower orders in more disgusting and discreditable prominence than at the present moment. The name of England is hated and loathed, for no other reason that I can discover but because her power is feared; and the festering vanity, the gnawing, feverish, restless self-love of the low Frenchman will not allow him to forget or forgive those disasters which have befallen the arms of his country, from the earliest period, when she has been rash enough to measure her strength with Britain, down to the last glorious and crowning defeat at Waterloo. Hitherto I have in these journeys done my nature much violence. I have endeavoured to champion down within me those recollections of which a Briton may be well proud. I have treated the people

among whom I for a moment dwell, not only with civility, but studied and deferential politeness; but these exhibitions of good feeling and good-will are, I regret to say, thrown away on the great mass of human beings with whom I come into contact. Instead of meeting me more than half way, as all gentlemanly and generous-minded men would do, they generally commence with braggadocio and bombast, and the cool and unutterable scorn with which I treat these empty boastings serves but to render them more wild and waspish. You will easily conceive that I do not here refer to the *élite* of this vain and volatile race; but the crowds whom one daily encounters at inns, *tables d'hôtes*, *restaurants*, *cafés*, theatres, and public places. This "mob of gentlemen" who talk with ease is for the most part composed of two classes, both the pests of French society, as they would be, if they had their will, the scourges of Europe in a small way. I allude, in the first place, to the class of *commis voyageurs*, or commercial travellers; and in the second, to the class of *sous-officiers*. It were difficult to say which of the two is the more noxious, mischievous, and insupportable.

The *commis voyageur* is generally a man between the ages of twenty-three and forty, and he belongs, *par excellence*, to the class of dirty dandies. From the cut of his habiliments you may easily

perceive that he apes modishness; but, on the other hand, if his coat be of respectable texture, you may be pretty sure that his linen is of a pale chocolate colour, or his hat in the category of the "shocking bad." The strength of the genus, as of the individual, however, lies in his hair. This is allowed to float down his shoulders in wild profusion, "wooing not only the rough caresses of the wind," but all those floating particles of sand, dust, feathers, burnt tobacco, cigars, and coffee, with which the air of large towns is so fully impregnated. A tooth or nail-brush he disdains to use, for *la jeune France* scorns cleanliness; but, on the other hand, if he takes no heed of nails or teeth, he cherishes beard and whiskers with exceeding fondness. Mustachios, imperials, tufts, *postiches*, are to him the urim and thummim. He enters an hotel or coffee-room with an insolent and audacious air; straightway occupies the best place; calls loudly on the waiter; rails, abuses, and growls by turns; seizes on the best dishes, and the best portions of them; and, finally, picking his teeth with his fork, resigns himself to the discussion of things political, theatrical, nautical, and military. He is a man who knows every thing. The motives of cabinets are open to, and lie patent before, him. He is aware why Palmerston signed the treaty without the sanction of France; and he can foretell to a certainty

the neutrality of Prussia. He has the finance of England at his fingers' ends, and he knows what is passing at the English dependency of Calcutta, and the French colony of Chandernagore. The Horse-guards and the Admiralty have confided to him their inmost thoughts. He knows what our enemies never hitherto discovered — that our ships cannot fight or sail, and that our army is disaffected.

He is in active correspondence with Ireland; and he is well aware that priests and people are stretching out their eyes and arms to see and welcome the French fleet, which is not in sight, though, if you are to believe him, it soon will be. He is intimate with the telegraph, and on more than speaking terms with the Semaphore; and he can tell to a dead certainty, that Duperré and Lalande have not only left Paris for Toulon, but are already afloat with sealed orders to destroy the English fleet, and burn Portsmouth and the other dockyards which have escaped the incendiary. On occasions such as these, so frequent as to be almost diurnal, I am sometimes tempted to interpose in the following fashion:—

"Monsieur est donc au ministère, car il sait tout?—Non, monsieur.

"Pardon, si je me trompe. Monsieur doit être alors employé aux affaires étrangères?—Non, monsieur!

"A coup sûr donc, il est premier commis au Bureau de la Guerre ou de la Marine?—Mais, non monsieur!

"Comme je suis bête! Il est certain, que monsieur rédige dans le *Moniteur* ou dans les *Débats?*—Oh! que non! monsieur!

"Comment, donc, est il possible que monsieur soit le secrétaire intime du Président de Conseil, qui se rend à Toulon en courrier à franc étrier?—Monsieur, non. Je fais de l'article.* Je voyage dans les confitures."

Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat, and I pledge you my honour that every single word, or, at least, the sense and substance of the conversation of which I give you a faint outline, took place in the good city of Bordeaux between myself and the omniscient bagman in comfits and preserves, who was travelling for a house in the Rue Montmartre, at Paris. This loquacious lollipop, ignorant, fluent, mendacious, daring, a brigand in politics, a freethinker in religion, a gross and brutal sensualist in action, was, of course, a democrat and a great friend to the policy of M. Thiers. His voice was loud for war as soon as he had satisfied the first cravings of hunger; and I could afterwards perceive him at

* This is a cant word among the bagmen, which signifies that they go about with patterns.

the theatre, a few nights ago, one of the most boisterous in calling for, and one of the most vehement in applauding, the "Marseillaise." It must be confessed, that the man is worthy of the minister, and the minister of the man. You will, I am sure, pardon me for entering into these details; it is all-important that I should do so. I dare say, on a rough guess, the bagmen or commercial travellers of France amount to 500,000, and this individual, and all-knowing bitter almond, is a type of the entire tribe. Young, eager, active, zealous, ready-witted, quick-spoken, but wholly ignorant and superficial, and without the least tincture of principle, morality, or religion, it is inconceivable what an influence these scamps exercise. They have their journals, their coffee-houses, their hotels, and their diligences; and wo to the unfortunate hotel-keeper, waiter, or conductor, who gives them the least offence. Individually and as a body, the *commis voyageurs* would level down every thing to their own standard. In their vocabulary, there is no such thing as an honest or virtuous woman; and when chance throws them into the company of a decent female, their language is of the stews and the bagnio. It sometimes happens that English ladies and gentlemen, deceived by the imperial and the moustachio, mistake these vagabonds for gentlemen; but it cannot be too generally known,

that all Frenchmen of condition have long since abandoned the moustachio, and men of rank and birth have never yielded to the beastly custom of smoking, in which the bagmen indulge "from night to morn, from morn to dewy eve."

If the *commis voyageurs* of France be insufferable, the *sous-officiers* tribe are also insupportably odious. Devoured by envy and ambition, they hunger and thirst for war. Unlettered, low-born, indigent, they yet desire to sit in high places; and, sensual and self-indulgent, like all Frenchmen, long to clothe themselves in fine linen, and to fare sumptuously every day. But how is this to be done unless by adopting a military code, of which brigandage and spoliation are the beginning, middle, and end? In the ranks of this numerous, savage, and brutal-minded class, there are but three predominant ideas—conquest, plunder, and personal advancement, and the last is always looked to as a consequence of the two former. These are the "*Tartari infranchisati*," as Alfieri boldly and beautifully called them—the "enfranchised Tartars," the envenomed and festering legacy of that callous Corsican despotism which unsettled and disturbed all Europe. These are the men who hound and halloo on mobs as poor, as ignorant, but less profligate and abandoned than themselves, to cry, "*Vive la guerre*," and "*Mort aux*

Anglais!" The possession of bull-dog animal courage, of great personal daring, of invincible energy, I by no means deny them. But in all the higher instincts and attributes of the soldier — in chivalry, devotedness, fidelity, in patience, in suffering, gallantry, courtesy, gentleness, and noble sentiments, they are miserably deficient. These are virtues which they neither understand, appreciate, nor practise. How should it be otherwise? Like the priests of perhaps the only, and certainly the greatest, poltron in Ireland, they leave the plough to better their condition, and of this green timber, France makes a *sous-officier*, and Maynooth a priest. But in both countries the raw material is essentially the same, and the tree bears a corresponding fruit. If the priest is ignorant, arrogant, domineering, so is the *sous-officier;* if the priest hates all superiority, and detests hierarchy of rank, so does the *sous-officier;* but make the one a dean, and give to the other an epaulette, and of the barking discontented demagogue you make a supple slave with cringing knee to those above him, and arrogant, insufferable haughtiness, to those whom accident has placed beneath him in the social scale.

These are, perhaps, the most dangerous men in this country; but they are dangerous only to the government and to the authorities. If war

were to break out to-morrow, England need not fear them. They are not of the stuff to command armies, or to lead men on to renown or victory. Of high military science they have no notion; and the only books, perhaps, they have ever read in their lives are the history of the *Sous-Lieutenant*, who first distinguished himself at the siege of Toulon, and the *Catechisme du Soldat Français*.

But, like the *commis voyageurs*, they have their *cafés*, *estaminets*, journal and minister. The former is the *National*, and the latter is the redoubtable M. Thiers. The people of England should no longer disguise from themselves this truth, that of every unclean, of every malignant, of every turbulent, of every brigand spirit, desiring war, rapine, and confiscation, this same clever little M. Thiers, the ex-journalist (who is in no degree cleverer or more capable than 300 of his former but less fortunate *collaborateurs* all over France), is the chosen idol and pattern minister.

It is, therefore, the interest of peace, of civilisation, of Christian Europe, that such a man should be overturned.

A great, an awful responsibility, rests on M. Guizot. I know his high and lofty character, his pure and stainless life. It is for him, with his grave and conscientious voice, to speak the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and to

say, in the face of his country and the world, whether the existing complications arise from the serious nature and gravity of the real question, or from the irritable vanity and wounded pride of one man, who, to gratify his spleen, would set the world in a flame. I am, God knows, no admirer of Lord Palmerston; but, be his faults what they may, he is at least a gentleman and a man of honour, and his personal integrity has never been impeached, unless by some disappointed subaltern or some raving madman. I am therefore slow to believe that he and three other foreign ministers, making a total of four, are altogether in the wrong, while the infallible little unit, Thiers, is wholly in the right. This, I am aware, is digression, and beside my purpose; but if you had heard, as I have heard, the "Marseillaise" sung nightly at Bordeaux amidst applauding thousands—if you had seen the processions which I have seen at Brives, marching in regimental order, with flying colours, and singing the "Chant du Départ"—if you had heard, as I heard at Toulouse, Cahors, Carcassonne, and Beziers, the expressions used, not only in reference to our country and countrymen, but to the whole of civilised Europe, you would, I am sure, use your mighty power to restore again to the *National* and *Courrier Français* a clever editor, in every way fitted to write

in those journals, but wholly incapable of governing France, or giving peace to Europe. In so doing you would render a service to the monarch and to the world.

To return, however, to Bordeaux. The commerce of the town has long been in a languishing condition, and now these rumours of war, and the actual state of Spain, reduce it to the lowest ebb. There is still, however, a considerable colonial trade; but such is deemed the hazard of the voyage, that 28 per cent is taken for insurance. Some of the war party here have induced a few of the shipowners to apply for letters of marque. Applications have been consequently made to the Minister of Marine, who has answered that a note will be made of the application. At present, therefore, no such letters have been granted, but on the first outbreak, I dare say as many as 50 or 60 would be accorded. The number of vessels at Bordeaux ten years ago amounted to 210; there are now about 312.

From Bordeaux I proceeded to Toulouse. I remained there for two days; but, owing to the perturbed state of the population, I was never able to close my eyes. I lodged in the Hôtel Vidal, Place du Capitole, and was regaled during two successive nights, even till three or four o'clock in the morning, with cries of "*Vive la Liberté!*" "*Vive la République!*" "*A bas Louis*

Philippe!" "*A bas le Préfet!*" "*Les Carlistes à la Lanterne!*" "*Les Carlistes on pendra!*" These cries were followed by the "Marseillaise," the "ça Ira," and the "Chant du Départ."

From Toulouse I proceeded by the Canal du Languedoc (of which on some future occasion I will give you an account) to Cette, whence I embarked for this place, where I arrived yesterday.

With the primitive history of Marseilles I do not mean to trouble you. Suffice it to say, that even in the earliest ages commerce and manufactures had here established themselves. While the rest of Europe was merged in darkness, Marseilles fabricated ornaments of jewellery and coral, and exported both soap and leather. Her inhabitants introduced into Gaul the olive and the vine, and carried their fisheries along the whole coast of the Mediterranean. The city became the centre of a commerce, not only with Gaul, but with Great Britain and the rest of Europe. The position of Marseilles enabled her to extend these commercial relations into the east, along the coasts of Greece, the Bosphorus, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Syria. The neighbour of Italy and Spain, she soon absorbed the commerce of these two countries. But these successes whetted the envy of rivals, and war was

the natural consequence. Marseilles was almost always victorious. Her fifty-oared barges, guided and governed by able sailors, alternately triumphed over the Rhodians, Phœnicians, and Carthaginians, till Cæsar laid siege to the city, when the Marseillaise, hitherto triumphant, were obliged to bite the dust. For a moment the city fell from her ancient importance, but commerce again resumed her sway, and the arts and industry of the place made Marseilles the occasional resort of the most illustrious Roman families. Though this city often changed her masters and her governors, yet, in the midst of her vicissitudes, she preserved, and she still preserves, her manners, customs, and institutions. Marseilles is still essentially and permanently Greek; and though twenty revolutions have rolled over her head, giving her to the Ligurians, to the Romans, to the Goths, and to the Gauls, yet she preserves those Ionic manners, forms, and habitudes, the result of the traditions of more than 2000 years; and her religion is still, with its gorgeous ceremonies, but a mitigated paganism.

In the middle ages commerce was the great bulwark of the Marseillaise. During the crusades her ports were filled with vessels and strangers for the Holy Land and Syria; and it is supposed

that then in the first rank of maritime cities the famous *Consolato del Mare* was the production of one of her citizens.

I will not go over the beaten ground of the civil war of France, but merely remark, that whether in ancient or modern history, Marseilles was always a place of importance. When Henry IV. learned that this city had sent in its adhesion to him, he exclaimed, "*C'est maintenant que je suis roi;*" and the exclamation proves how much importance he attached to the possession of the place. In 1660, Louis XIV. came here in person to quell a sedition, thus affording a new proof of the dread with which a defection of the Marseillaise was regarded. It was then this monarch laid the foundation of the Bastile, a fortification which exists to the present day. It was 60 years after this, in the reign of his successor, that the plague broke out in Marseilles, for the fifteenth time in the space of four centuries! 30,000 persons then fell victims to this scourge of humanity; but it is not less strange than true, that notwithstanding these desolating visitations, the population has always steadily increased. In the period of the dominion of the Romans it was 50,000; in the middle ages, 65,000; in the sixteenth century, 82,000; and in the eighteenth, 106,585.

A similar progression is perceptible in the mercantile history of the city.

In 1760, 1506 vessels entered this harbour, of which 1034 were French.

In 1792 this cipher was increased to 2442 vessels, of a tonnage of 322,300 tons.

The number of vessels outward-bound in the same year amounted to 2617, of a tonnage of 361,780 tons.

The exportations from 1783 to 1792 amounted in value, on the average, to 60,080,000f. per year; and of importations, to 78,280,000f.

The wars of the Republic and the Empire were most unfavourable to the commerce of Marseilles. In 1804 the importations only amounted to 44,000,000f.; and to this circumstance was owing, in a great degree, the unpopularity of the Emperor. Such was the devastating influence of these wars, that from 1804 to 1815 the population of Marseilles was reduced to 80,000 souls, of whom it is said that one-half at least subsisted on charity. Seven years, however, of uninterrupted peace again restored the balance of population, and in 1822 the inhabitants numbered not less than 120,000.

I need not say that since 1830 the conquest of Algiers has given a new impulse to the industry of the inhabitants. In 1832 the population amounted to 145,000 souls.

The number of vessels entered at Marseilles from 1825 to 1831 form a total of 5788, measuring 445,080 tons. The number going out in the

export trade during the same number of years amounted to 5146, measuring 402,208 tons.

The revenue of the customs in 1810 amounted to 4,993,085f.; in 1820, 14,708,260f.; and in 1833, 30,877,977f.

With these facts before their eyes, it is not therefore to be supposed that the *haut commerce* of Marseilles desire or wish for war. The fact is quite the contrary; and if there were such a thing as public opinion in France, which there is not, the mercantile men of this city would express the indignation and disgust they feel at the manner in which the country has been excited to serve the selfish and ambitious purposes of a single minister.

The men of capital and substance, I repeat, are all opposed to the furious, revolutionary, and barbarous proceedings of which this city has lately been the theatre, and they take occasion to express those feelings to the Consuls whose flags have been so grossly insulted. The number of vessels belonging to this port in 1830 was 170; there are now more than 260.

The harbour of Marseilles is safe and commodious. Its surface extends over a space of 45,000 metres. The *Lazarette* is a magnificent establishment, and is supposed, from its extent and the surface it covers, to be equal to a fifteenth of the whole city.

The harbour is now encumbered with shipping, principally composed of vessels which have unshipped their cargoes in dread of war. There are, however, several Italian and English vessels in port.

The city is divided into two parts: the first, situate on an eminence to the north, above the harbour, is the old town, which is filthy, confined, and ill-built; the second is the new town, elegantly built in a modern style, and separated from the old city by a magnificent street, which extends in a right line from the Porte d'Aix to the Porte de Rome, and traverses the entire length of the city. This street is called the Cours; and as it is sheltered by trees, it is the favourite promenade in fine weather. The houses on either side are well-built, and the fountains numerous and tasteful; but truth compels me to add, that from the filth and Eastern habits of the people, Marseilles is but one vast cloaca.

The feculent odour of the harbour is insupportable in hot weather, and abominable enough even in winter. The climate, in certain senses, has its advantages, but it has also its disadvantages. The mistral is an abominable and unhealthy wind; and the absence of tides in the Mediterranean, joined to the filthy habits of the people, gives to the air a fetidity which not all the odour of the orange groves can obliterate or efface.

The language of Marseilles is a barbarous jargon. It is composed of the Greek, Latin, Turkish, the Romance, the Provençal, and the French. I have said the people preserve their ancient customs and religious traditions. Among the former are the Olivettes, the Moresques, the Jarretières, and the Falandou, ancient national dances; and among the latter is the religious ceremony of the *Fête Dieu*, when an ox with gilded horns, covered with flowers and ornaments, is led through the city. This recalls to mind the ancient sacrifice to Diana, of which, no doubt, it is a mitigated Christian copy. My next letter shall be from Toulon, for which I sail to-day.

TOULON.

Arrival at Toulon. — The Fortifications. — The Roadstead. — Excitement in the Fort. — Impressment nearly unknown in France. — Manning the French Navy. — Number of Free Workmen in the Dockyard. — Number of *Forçats*. — Number of Workmen at the Arsenal. — Distinguishing the *Forçats*. — Vessels carrying on Communication with Algiers. — Progress of the French Navy. — Sailors of Brittany, Normandy, and Picardy. — Naval Administration of France. — The Fleet at Toulon. — Pay of the French Sailors in the Merchant and Government Service. — The Souverain. — M. Bellecroix. — The Sapphir Steam-boat. — Her Power. — The Authorities. — Difficulty of Entering the Arsenal. — Refusal of Admittance to English Gentlemen. — The City of Toulon. — Its Site. — Henry IV. — Enlargement of the Town. — Louis XVI. — Convents before the Revolution. — Toulon the Seat of a Maritime Prefecture. — The Arsenal and its Extent. — Number of Free Workmen and *Forçats*. — Pay of the Galley-Slaves. — The *Corderie*, its Dimensions. — Sieges of Toulon. — Increasing of the Forts. — Port and Roadstead of Toulon. — The Population. — New Hamlets. — The Fortifications of La Malgue. — A new Arsenal. — Magazine of Timber. — The Mercantile Port. — The Disposition of the People. — The Garrison. — Mad Ravings of La Jeune France.

October 21, 1840.

I have been here for the last four days, actively engaged, not only in examining the *port militaire* and roadstead, but also the fortifications and the other objects worthy of note in this town. Some

portion of the matter which I meant to address to you has been anticipated by your correspondent "Peregrine," who addressed you from this place on the 26th of September, nearly a month ago. His letter, if I recollect rightly, appeared in *The Times* either of the 1st or 2d of the present month; but as there are some errors in that letter, incident perhaps to the haste in which it was written, and as those errors have occasioned some surprise here, you, and I am sure the writer also, will pardon me for correcting the mistakes into which he has unwittingly fallen. In speaking of the excitement consequent in this port, "Peregrine" talks of the impending press-gangs. Now there is no such thing in France as a press-gang; and indeed the whole system of impressment is unknown. This is a matter so notorious, that I am sure it was known to your correspondent, but in the hurry of the moment he doubtless employed a word, which is the one in common usage in England, but which has no signification in France, the system of impressment never having been in operation in this kingdom.* In one of my former

* I know there are some who contend that the mode of procuring hands for the French navy is equivalent to impressment, and that our system is more favourable to the seamen than the French. In time of peace a British seaman is certainly not compelled to serve in Her Majesty's ships, whereas, in the French navy, all men inscribed must take their turn in peace as well as war.

letters from Cherbourg (I am not aware whether it ever reached you), I endeavoured to explain the system of manning the French navy. That system established by Colbert, though modified by the National Convention, exists in France to the present day. It consists in a special register, in which the name of every French citizen destined for the naval profession is entered, and which altogether obviates the necessity of impressment. For further details I refer you to my letter written somewhere about the 16th of September, and which was probably published in *The Times* of the 20th or 21st. It is further stated, in the communication on which I am commenting, that "the number of free workmen in the dockyard amounts to 2500, besides 3000 or 4000 *forçats*." Now, at this moment, and for the last two months, there have been more than 5000 free workmen employed in the arsenal, and more than 3500 *forçats*.

It is also stated, that the four vessels which carry on the communication with Algiers, namely, the Papin, the Chimere, the Tartare, and the Phaeton, are "small vessels of low power." The fact is not so. The smallest of these vessels is of 160 horse-power, and the others of 220. "Peregrine" must be aware that before we can run we must learn to walk, and if he knew, as I do (for I saw the machinery with my own eyes), that the

very first steamer for the service of this government was launched only in 1824, sixteen small years ago, he would be more astonished at the great progress than surprised at the backwardness of the French navy. I very freely admit, with your correspondent, that the boats at Toulon are inferior to those in the Clyde and in the Mersey; but what does this prove, but that England maintains a superiority which she always possessed. My original position, however, remains untouched —that within the last ten years France has made in her marine a greater progress than any nation in Europe, or, perhaps, than all the nations of Europe together. But this progress is, I freely admit, less apparent at Toulon than in the other *ports militaires*, and for reasons which I will shortly cite to you. The best sailors undoubtedly come from the coasts of Brittany, Normandy, and Picardy. There the coldness of the climate, the frequency of gales, the prevalence of fogs, the darkness of the nights, the existence of tides, the nature of the coast, rocky, dangerous, and insecure, compel the sailor to exert his energies, and to put forth all his faculties, to their utmost stretch. It is otherwise in the Mediterranean. A sunny and cloudless sky, a brilliant and burning sun, resplendent and starry nights, the total absence of tides, and the prevalence of dead and long-continued calms, are not without their effect in im-

parting to the Mediterranean sailor that listlessness, that *dolce farniente* air at once so inimical to discipline, and so ruinous to seamanship. I am not therefore surprised, that one accustomed to the climates of the north cries out loudly against the Mediterranean sailor; but there are, nevertheless, occasions and seasons when he is capable of great daring and great energy. I admit he is vastly inferior to the men of the north in vigilance, industry, and discipline; but though filthy, indolent, and revengeful, he is yet capable of great things when well officered, and draughted into ships' companies composed of Bretons and Normans.

The naval administration of France is wise enough to adopt this system; and the result is, that the fleet at Toulon is just as well manned and manœuvred as the fleet off Cherbourg or Brest. I do not deny that the maritime population of the Mediterranean lack vigour and activity; but I maintain that, mixed with other sailors in the *équipages de ligne*, they will do their duty just as well as the *Nordmen*, and, on great occasions, perhaps, in a more dare-devil, dashing, and gallant fashion.

One would fancy from the letter to which I refer that 27 francs a-month were the only reward of the French sailor, but "Peregrine" does not state (which is the fact) that there are three rates

of pay; and that, besides, the captain commanding has the right and the option to make an additional allowance to any of his ship's crew specially worthy of such remuneration. I am, nevertheless, free to admit that the highest retribution of the government sailor is on too low a scale. The merchant service pays the sailor nearly twice as much as the government, but this is owing to certain small-witted economists in the Chamber of Deputies—such for instance as M. Guilhem, the Joseph Hume of France (without, however, Joseph's stupidity and want of education)—who are perpetually crying out for miserable reductions. On a future occasion I shall have to speak of the rates of pay in the French navy from the Admiral down to the *mousse;* but I have done enough, for the present, in remarking, that your correspondent, in speaking of the 27 francs with compulsory service (as if all such service were not compulsory in every country of the world), has omitted to state a qualifying ingredient—namely, that it is in the power of the captain to increase the pay of the seamen.

Another grave error has crept into the letter of your correspondent. In speaking of the Souverain, which I visited yesterday (and here I return my heartfelt thanks to M. Bellecroix, the commandant, for his extreme politeness), he says, "She has at present only 450 men out of 1000;

but the French plan, when hands run short, is to draught a party of *infanterie de marine* on board." It is quite true that the Souverain has not her complement of men; but it is an error to say that in such cases it is the custom to draught the *infanterie de marine*. That, on the contrary, is never done in any instance whatever. All that "Peregrine" states as to the hospital of St. Mandrier, as to the coasting-trade between this and Marseilles being in its infancy, is to the letter correct. The Sapphir, however, is not of 40 but of 80-horse power, and yet her average passage between this and Marseilles is six hours. It should, however, be stated that she always touches at Crotal to embark and disembark passengers. Both you and your correspondent will, I know, forgive me for making these remarks, which are the more necessary, as the extremely well-written, and, in other respects, clever letter of your correspondent has excited quite a sensation at Toulon. But the just exposure which he has made of the authorities here has not, I regret to state, shamed them into something like liberal conduct; Englishmen are still refused admission —peremptorily and arbitrarily refused—into the arsenal. As to myself, as I before remarked to you, I enter every where as a native Frenchman; but it pained me yesterday to perceive that an English gentleman who obtained admission was

obliged to resort to the subterfuge (I use the word in no bad or offensive sense) of getting in under the wings of an American Secretary of Legation. I do not believe, as I stated in my letter from Rochefort, that the Préfet Maritime, the Vice-Admiral Jurien Lagravière, who is a peer of France, has any thing to do with these mean, spiteful, and petty annoyances. They spring altogether from that worthy and respectable *little* man, M. Thiers.

To-day and yesterday Austrians of the Milanese and of Venice entered freely, but a gentleman attached to the household of the Queen of England was refused.

It is high time, however, that I should acquaint you with what I have actually visited, and that I should give you some slight sketch of the place itself.

Situated at the extremity of a large gulf, Toulon rises gracefully and majestically towards the north, extending her ramparts to the foot of a chain of high mountains stretching from the east to the west. The position of the place would be picturesque and beautiful, were there the least verdure; but the rocks and mountains are arid, bare, and totally destitute of covering or umbrage of any kind. Toulon is an extremely ancient city. Destroyed and rebuilt by turns, it is supposed that it has undergone sixteen different transformations

since the commencement of the Christian era. Each transformation brought with it a change of position, until at length the inhabitants discovered they were most sheltered in the actual site on which the town at present stands. Over the ancient history of the place I will not tediously travel, giving you a *refeciamento* of that lumbering second-hand literature which may be had for the cheap transcription, and which would be useless even at so small a cost. I will come at once to the time of Henry IV., to which prince the city owes its modern importance. In 1594 he enlarged the town, raised the bastions of St. Catherine and St. Vincent, and walled the city. Louis XIV. finished the task which his predecessor had begun. Before the Revolution of 1789 there were six convents at Toulon of men, six of women, and an establishment of Jesuits. These, as well as the bishop, have all disappeared, and Toulon is no longer an episcopal city. But it is, what is of more importance in modern France, the seat of a maritime prefecture, and of the eighth military division. Probably, the arsenal of Toulon is the finest in France. It extends over a surface of 354,141 square metres. On ordinary occasions about 4000 free workmen are employed within its walls, but at present there are nearly 6000, not comprising *forçats*, who are more than 3500. Several of the galley-slaves

receive from eight to ten centimes a-day, and some of them, engaged in heavy and arduous labour, such as sawyers, receive nine-tenths of the actual value of their work.

I have so recently described four arsenals, that I will not in the present letter go over in detail the *corderie*, the *voilerie*, the *magasin général*, and the *bassin*. In all the French dock-yards these more or less resemble each other; I shall therefore almost confine myself to the dimensions of the *corderie*. It was erected under the orders and from the designs of the celebrated Vauban. It is 1120 feet long, and 64 broad. It is surmounted by two upper stories, where the materials for ropes and cables are prepared.

Toulon has undergone two sieges in modern times. The first by the Duke of Savoy, in 1707, where, in twenty-six days, 14,000 of his men perished; the second in 1793, where the young lieutenant of artillery, afterwards the Emperor Napoleon, commenced his first feat of arms. I mention these two well-known facts in order to shew that these very sieges were the promoting and proximate causes of the ameliorations which the fortifications of the place have subsequently undergone. And since the conquest of Algiers in 1830, the forts have been considerably increased, as they are, indeed, augmenting at the very moment at which I write. Toulon has, in fact,

become the central point between the metropolis and Africa. Hence troops and passengers, money, and munitions of war, are freighted for the new colony; and within a very few years the port and roadstead have assumed increased importance. The population of the town has increased to 45,000. The suburbs are not only increasing, but it is in consequence found necessary to add additional stories to the older houses. Since 1830 two new hamlets, or *fauxbourgs*, have sprung up without the walls; one on the road to Valette, the other on the road to Ollioulles. The second is filthy, fetid, and abominable. It goes by the name of Navarin, and is chiefly the abode of the poor Genoese who come to Toulon to earn their bread.

As far as I am capable of judging, I should say that the town is admirably fortified, surrounded by a double rampart and by a large and deep ditch, defended to the east, west, and north, by mountains and hills covered with redoubts; it is protected on the south by the sea, on which, stretching from east to west, is one of the safest and largest harbours in the world. Among the fortifications, that of La Malgue is the most remarkable, not only for its extent, but the solidity of its construction. The French tell you that this fort is impregnable; but that which man once did, man may do again; and if the

occasion calls on England to buckle on her armour and gird her loins, I have no doubt that some new Hood will again appear, first to take and destroy the fort, and then to drink a glass of the wine which grows beneath its bristling batteries, esteemed the best in all Provençe, to the health of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen of England. Latterly, preparations are in progress to unite the town to this fortress. A solid rampart with fosses has been already raised, and a new arsenal, meant as an appendage to the old, has been created at the Mourillon. There are here eight slips, each supporting a first-rate vessel, on which the workmen are busily engaged, and there is also a vast magazine of oak timber, admirably arranged. In the older arsenal, four smaller vessels are on the stocks.

The mercantile port of Toulon is also considerable, has been increasing, and must continue to increase, so long as this people hold Africa. There are eight steamers continually plying between this place, Africa, Corsica, Italy, and the East. Two very small vessels ply between Toulon and La Seyne. The disposition of the people is at this moment warlike, or at least appears to be so. In depending, as the inhabitants do, on the army and navy, they necessarily become impregnated with their notions. There is always here a garrison of from 5000 to 6000 men. It has been

of late considerably increased; and these, with the crews of vessels, for the most part all young men under twenty-four, impregnate the people with ideas of conquest, spoliation, and brigandage. At the end of all their glorious visions and vistas, I regret to say there always is, conceal it or gloze it over as they may, the hope of booty and the desire of plunder.

You will not, therefore, be surprised to learn that the *cafés,* the theatres, the public walks, the open champaign country, all — all resound with the "Marsellaise," the "Ca Ira," and the "Chant du Départ."

Alas! poor dare-devils, they will gain nothing by their frantic vehemence but hard knocks and chains. Their madness is at least sincere; but what must we think of the villain who, for his own selfish ends, does his best to plunge his country in anarchy, and Europe in conflagration?

I have not yet done with Toulon: I must still trouble you with another letter.

TOULON.

Department of the Var, Toulon.—The Population.—Its Military Organisation.—The Direction of *Constructions Navales.*—Works and Constructions of the Port of Toulon.—Naval School of Artillery.—Commissaire Générale of the Marine.—The Staff of the Infantry of Marine.—Principal Clerks.—The Management of the *Subsistances de la Marine.*—The *Conseil d'Amiraute.*—*Conseil des Travaux de la Marine.*—Dépôt for Naval Charts.—Admirals and Vice-Admirals.—Captains of Frigates.—Midshipmen.—The *Elèves.*—The Roadstead of Toulon.—Climate, and Absence of Tides.—The Port.—Financial Details.—The Expense of Provisions, &c., for Marine Hospital, &c.—The Total Value of Provisions, &c., in the Magazines of Toulon, &c.—Admirable Manner of keeping Accounts.—Government Clerks.—Difference in the Speed and the Price of the *Malle Poste* and *Diligence.*—Amount of Provisions aboard the *Bâtimens Armés.*—Value of *Apparaux Machines et Outils.*—Difference in Marine Stores between Brest and Toulon.—Masts at Toulon.—Store of Coals.—The Number of Vessels in course of Construction at L'Orient, Rochefort, and Toulon.—The Total Amount of all Materials, &c.—The Expenses of *Forçats* in all the Ports.

October 25, 1840.

My last letter from this place, written four days ago, and which possibly will have been published

ere this reaches you, will have given you some of my notions concerning the port of Toulon. In the present I mean to pursue my inquiries, and, if possible, to finish the subject. Toulon is in the department of the Var; a department which has its name from the river flowing through it, and which separates it from the county of Nice, forming a portion of Piedmont. It is bounded on the east by the county of Nice, on the south by the Mediterranean, on the west by the department of the Bouches du Rhone, and on the north by the department of the Lower Alps. The arrondissement is composed of twenty-eight communes, having a population of 94,242 souls. The military organisation is composed of an Etat Major-Général, of which M. de Tarlé, Maréchal de Camp, commanding the department of the Var, is the chief. The Capitaine d'Etat Major is the Comte Jules de Lyle Taulane. There is also a *direction d'artillerie du génie* and an *intendance militaire.*

Toulon is the fifth maritime arrondissement, of which the Maritime Prefect is M. Jurien Lagravière, Vice-Admiral and Peer of France. The Etat Major of the port is composed of eight individuals, all naval men, one a rear-admiral, and the others post-captains, captains of corvettes, and lieutenants.

The direction of *constructions navales* is composed of fourteen individuals, all engineers, under

whom are 13 *maîtres charpentiers*, 4 *maîtres calfateurs*, 2 *maîtres perceurs*, 3 *maîtres mécaniciens*, 2 *maîtres cordiers*, 1 *maître sculpteur*, 1 *maître poulieur*, 1 *maître tenellier*, 1 *maître forgeron*, 1 *maître serrurier*, 1 *maître tôlier*.

All the works and constructions of the port are under the superintendence of four navy captains.

The naval artillery is under the direction of eight superior officers and four subordinate officers.

There is also a royal naval school of artillery for the officers, under the superintendence of three superior officers, to which are attached professors of mathematics, fortification, geometry, drawings, &c.

The staff of the Infantry of Marine is composed of 16 officers, 6 captains of the first class, 9 of the second, 5 lieutenants of the first class, 8 of the second, and 16 *sous-lieutenants*.

There is also at Toulon, as at all the other *ports militaires*, a *commissaire générale* of the Marine, under whom there are commissaries of the first and second class, and sub-commissaries also of the first and second class. There are also 13 principal clerks, 15 others of the first class, and 48 of the second.

The subsistence of the marine is managed by a director of the first class, 2 sub-directors

of the second class, and 18 clerks of the first, second, and third class. These gentlemen supply the place of the pursers of our fleet under a widely different, and I hesitate not to say a better, a more trustworthy, and a more economical system; but all these *employés*, from the highest to the lowest, are under the superintendence and control of the Minister of the Marine and of the *Conseil d'Amiraute*, sitting at Paris, which is composed of seven individuals, at the head of which is the Minister of the Marine. The other members of the council are either vice or rear-admirals, with three exceptions, namely, the Baron Tupinier, *directeur des ports de France*, the Baron Charles Dupin, Councillor of State, and M. Caucheprat, *maître des requêtes*, the Secretary.

Under this council is a *chef de division*, a *bureau* apart, managed by a councillor of state for the colonies; also a separate office, managed by a *maître des requêtes*, for passing and auditing all the accounts, and four inspectors-general. There is also sitting at Paris a *Conseil des Travaux de la Marine*, composed of eight members, three of whom are naval men, three naval engineers, and one a *maréchal de camp*. In the metropolis is also a dépôt of naval charts and plans, of which M. Halgan, vice-admiral and peer of France, is the director; and an historical

section, to which three literary men are attached. As this is, perhaps, the last occasion, on which I shall address you on maritime subjects, I may as well state, that there is 1 admiral in France, 11 vice-admirals, having a pay afloat of 720*l.* a-year, and on land, 600*l.* There are 20 *contre amiraux*, the pay afloat amounting to 480*l.*, and not afloat to 400*l.* a-year; 30 post-captains of the first class, receiving afloat 240*l.* a-year, and on land 200*l.*; 50 of the second class, pay employed, 216*l.*; and not employed, 180*l.* Among this class is his Royal Highness the Prince de Joinville, who entered the service six or seven years ago.

There are 17 captains of frigates, who receive when employed, 168*l.* a-year; and not employed, 145*l.* There are 160 captains of corvettes, 53 of the first, and 107 of the second class. Of *lieutenants de vaisseau* there are 500; 100 of the first class, and 400 of the second class. The pay of these officers is 120*l.* afloat, and 105*l.* not afloat.

The number of *enseignes de vaisseau*, or midshipmen, amounts to 600; and they receive 72*l.* afloat, and 65*l.* not afloat.

The *élèves* of the first class are 200, with a pay of 32*l.* a-year.

The *élèves* of the second class are determined

each year by a royal ordinance, and they receive 19*l.* 4*s.* 2*d.* yearly.

Of the subordinate officers I shall speak in a subsequent letter, and I now return to the port of Toulon. It is quite true, as one of your correspondents stated, that the roadstead has every thing but an active and vigorous maritime population. Such is the effect of the climate, of the absence of tides, of a burning sun, and depressing wind, that the energies of man seem to wither and fade away. Here is neither the enterprise nor the daring of the nations of the north; but it should also be remembered that the crews of the vessels stationed at Toulon are composed of natives of all parts of France, but a majority are of Brittany, Normandy, Picardy, and the Pas de Calais. There is also here a complete absence of small craft; and the sails of the fishermen are for the most part latteen and shoulder-of-mutton sails, ill-contrived and clumsily set. It would be idle to compare such a place to any English port; for there is very little commerce, and that little has grown up within the last ten years; but, notwithstanding, I say, Toulon, her arsenal, and her fleet, have made, are making, and must continue to make, further progress, provided France retains her colonies in Africa. This, however, is very pro-

blematical; and it is easy to see such is the opinion of French statesmen, for the major part of her fleet has been cruising off these her newly acquired and unjustly retained possessions; and now there is a talk of increasing it to nineteen vessels, but none of those recently spoken of are in a state to put immediately to sea. It was stated a month ago, that the Souverain had then only 450 of her complement of men. How this may be I am not in a condition to state; but I know that yesterday she had more than 1000 men, and seamen are coming in very slowly, but surely. I admit there is a great deal of fuss and noise made concerning this. It is, perhaps, "much ado about nothing;" but it is in the nature of low and ill-mannered Frenchmen to brag, bully, bluster, and gasconade, and *la jeune France* is low and ill-mannered in a supreme degree. It is to be hoped the good sense and firmness of the sagacious and political prince who governs France may keep these unruly and turbulent brigands, who only sigh for pillage and confiscation, in order; but if he be (which I do not think he will be) overmastered in the commendable attempt, Europe must teach them a lesson which they will remember longer than Waterloo, or I miscalculate greatly. I, like your correspondent, think with perfect composure of our own resources, persuaded that as England is the freest,

so is she the mightiest and the most powerful, nation in the world. I also look with perfect composure as to the result of a collision between the two nations; but I nevertheless repeat, that France has made immense naval progress within the last ten years, and that she is still continuing to make progress. That her marine could withstand ours for half-a-dozen hours, I am not fool enough to believe; but that is not the question. The question is, into what combinations she may enter with other powers against our naval supremacy, in the event of a general war; and in such a case every vessel counts. None of the admirals spoken of in the Paris journals for the last month have as yet arrived here, and Heaven knows if they may come before Christmas.

I can, however, assure you that the Souverain, of 120 guns, is nearly ready for sea, and her captain, M. Jouglas, already aboard, and that four vessels of 90 guns are in a very advanced state of construction. There are also three small vessels of 50 guns and two smaller, in all nine vessels; but it will take a considerable time to finish them, and a still longer time to furnish them with their complement of men. But such a fleet, incomplete, clumsily manœuvred, nay, even ill-officered, may do grievous injury to our commerce, or decide, in a critical moment, the fate of a battle. It should, therefore, be our ob-

ject to look at these ports with vigilance, but without dread; but, above all, to be prepared to shew our enemies (whenever they declare themselves) a spice of that spirit which hitherto, as hereafter (let us hope), will constitute the strength and glory of Old England.

I will now pass to some financial details.

The expense of provisions, medicines, and medical treatment, in the Marine Hospital of Toulon amounted during the past year to 135,433f. 18c., and the total value of articles in the hospital, comprising provisions, medicines, surgical instruments, &c., to 775,363f. 84c. In respect to the treatment of the sick, the expenses at Toulon are nearly double those of Brest. The value of surgical instruments in the hospitals of Toulon amounts, at the present moment, to 76,700f. 16c.

The total value of provisions and rations in the magazines of Toulon, at this moment, amounts to 809,433f. 6c., and the total number of rations delivered out represent a value of 3,694,728f. 78c.

In both these respects Toulon stands foremost, Brest taking the second place. In the value of brute materials, which the hand of man is to fashion and fabricate, Toulon stands first, the value of such materials now amounting to 1,080,921f. 46c.

I before observed on the admirable manner in which the public accounts are kept in France,

and in no respect does this appear more potently than in the marine budget.

There is in every maritime arsenal of France a *garde magasin général*, whose business it is to store all the raw materials. Nothing is delivered out except on a demand in writing, and the articles so delivered undergo the check, control, and supervision of the maritime clerks, called *sectionnaires*, who are the deputies of the *garde magasin général*. Each *atelier* has also a special magazine for its current wants, and a dépôt for objects in course of preparation. In the *ateliers* there is a class of clerks called *écrivains*, who receive the pay of *contre maîtres*, and who are under the supervision of the *maître d'atelier*. The *écrivains* are also employed in the central *bureau* of *comptabilité* when a general balance is about to be struck. With so many checks and balances fraud is well-nigh impossible; and I should also remark, that in leaving the dockyards each workman is searched. This system has doubtless its advantage, but it has its inconveniences too. There is not, of course, that promptitude and quick labour which one sees in an English dockyard. The articles go through four or five different hands before they reach the workman, and there is of course a prodigious, I might say a multitudinous, quantity of pen work. In the

"cankers of a calm world and a long peace," when every idle fellow who has a little interest desires to become a government clerk, this system may be presented as the excuse, though it affords no justification, for a lavish use of patronage; and I should also add, that it daily augments in France the giant vice of *bureaucratie*. In a time of war such a system is manifestly complex and inconvenient; it retards and relaxes great speculations, interposes unnecessary delays, and complicates the simplest orders of the Minister of Marine. In such a season, too, it would afford unusual facilities to some blundering Hume, or some false-hearted traitor and poltroon like Mr. Daniel O'Connell (though, to the honour of France, be it said, such a combination of knave and coward does not disgrace her soil), to thwart and traverse the noblest national enterprises; for all is laid bare in the budget, with a nudity and frankness more timorous than wise. It is the fear of a few huckstering deputies, and the desire of a cheap popularity, which prevents such a thing as a great minister from appearing in France. All is nowadays resolved into a question of miserable francs and centimes, and nobody appears penetrated with the truth of the maxim of the immortal Sully—a statesman the very reverse of prodigal or wasteful—*que les grandes dépenses font souvent les grandes épargnes.*

These remarks are not made hastily or unadvisedly. I know that the very ministers who cause to appear in their budget the number of kilogrammes of biscuit which has been produced from 2,931,347 kilogrammes of corn, at 78 kilogrammes to the hectolitre, deeply lament the necessity of wasting so much paper and so much time in such trivial details, but the penny-wise and pound-foolish system appears now to be the grand panacea of this most parsimonious nation—the most parsimonious and mean-minded in money matters, I verily believe, on the face of the earth. It is a curious fact, but nevertheless true, that the *malles postes* throughout France are for the most part filled by Englishmen and other foreigners. They are of course the best and quickest conveyances, but as the fare is nearly double that of the diligences, the money-saving Gauls make but little use of them. If these people reflected, however (which they never did and never will), they would come to the conclusion that for him who has any occupation, the economy of time is the greatest and best of all economies. But even in a more material point of view, the *malle* is the cheapest conveyance, for in a long journey more is spent in eating and drinking at the different stations of the diligences than would constitute the difference between the fare of the one conveyance and the other. Of this a Frenchman has no idea.

He seldom takes an elevated or expansive view, and never has the shrewdness or the calculation to fathom the meaner mysteries of human life.

In the amount of provisions aboard the *bâtimens armés* Toulon is inferior to Brest; the amount in the former representing a value of 832,062f., and in the latter of 857,957f.

In the value of *apparaux machines* and *outils* Toulon is inferior both to Brest and L'Orient, as will appear from the following figures:—

The value at Brest is.....7,245,495
Ditto at L'Orient.....6,147,792
Ditto at Toulon.....5,544,199

In the amount of *matières* of *matériel naval* sold into the port during the financial year Toulon is also inferior to Brest, the value of these materials at Brest being 27,356,984f., and at Toulon 16,961,088f. In objects in a state of actual preparation Toulon takes only the third place, being inferior to Brest and Rochefort.

In objects prepared and in a state to serve, Toulon takes the second place, according to the value declared, as follows:—

Brest.....13,176,875f. 86c.
Toulon.....12,933,395f. 57c.

In all that relates to machinery, anchors, cables, cranes, nails, wheels, joineries, ovens,

bellows, hammers, shears, anvils, tumbrils, pontons, drilling-machines, troughs, &c., Brest takes the pre-eminence. I do not trouble you with the figures, which are tedious and wearisome.

There is a greater amount of marine stores at Brest than at Toulon. In the former the value of the *apparaux machines* and *outils* amounts to 5,641,029f., and in the latter to 4,459,305f.

The finest dépôt of oak wood is certainly at Toulon; it contains 9263 stores, being double the amount contained at any other port. This oak is, for the most part, the production of the French soil; but within the last week an immense cargo has arrived from Odessa on board a Genoese vessel, for the use of the government. No doubt the wise men at our Admiralty take particular interest in every thing *wooden*. The matter is very germane to their heads, though, God knows, they have nothing about them of the heart of oak. Oh! that poor Jack would raise a cry against these pitiful pinch-sailors, which might reach from the Land's End to John o'Groat's House. There are now at Toulon 20 masts of 30 palmes, 51 of 21, 109 masts of from 12 to 16 palmes. Of iron, in bar, there is at present in store, 241,425 kilogrammes, being a greater amount than exists in any of the *ports militaires*, except Brest. In the quantity of coals in store Toulon is much inferior to L'Orient, the

latter port containing 46,860 hectolitres, while the former contains only 17,964.

As a port of construction Toulon is inferior, as I observed in a former letter, to L'Orient, and perhaps to Rochefort, as will appear by the following figures:—

The number of vessels in course of construction at L'Orient is 16, valued at 8,652,389f. 32c.; the number at Rochefort is 14, valued at 6,900,382f. 5c.; while at Toulon there are but 13 in course of construction, whose value amounts to 6,496,517f. 60c.

The Toulon fleet is, however, more numerous by 10 vessels than that of Brest; the former consisting of 73 vessels, valued at 34,442,908f. 7c., while the latter consists of 63 vessels, valued at 30,226,071f. 45c.

The number of *bâtimens désarmés* nearly doubles at Toulon the number contained in any other port.

The total sum of all materials of every kind and nature at Toulon for the service of the marine amounts to 93,227,104f. 6c. Brest comes within 940,000f. of this cipher.

In the *Travaux de l'Artillerie* and the *Matériel des Forts et Batteries dependant de la Marine*, Toulon is inferior both to Brest and Rochefort.

At Brest the value is.....1,084,639f. 31c.
At Rochefort..... 226,097f. 76c.
At Toulon 95,708f. 21c.

In *travaux hydrauliques* Cherbourg stands in the first place, and Toulon in the second. The pay of workmen at Cherbourg amounts to a greater sum than is disbursed at Toulon or Brest, for this plain reason, that there are no *forçats* at Cherbourg; but if the keep and maintenance of the *forçats* were added to the expense of labour in the other ports, I am certain it would be found, and indeed the authorities admit, that this forced or slave labour is a charge on, rather than a gain to, the government. The expenses of the *forçats* in all the ports during the past year amounted to 329,537f. 16c., and their consumption of provisions and other materials amounted to 1,172,288f. 40c. I repeat, adding these two sums together it will appear that these individuals are a charge to the government. In the *matériel* of *sciences et arts maritimes*, comprising charts, maps, plans, instruments of navigation, chronometers, books of voyages and travels, Toulon is behind Brest and Rochfort, as will appear by the following figures:—

The value of these articles at Brest amounts to 136,993f.; at Rochefort, to 110,393f.; and at Toulon, to 92,124f.

I cannot too often ask pardon for entering into these details, which have, nevertheless, cost me more than double or triple the labour in selection which they will cost to the readers in the perusal. A month's occasional study is hardly sufficient to make the traveller perfectly acquainted with *Compte du Matériel de la Marine*, a large and closely printed volume of 547 closely printed quarto pages, wholly devoted to accounts.

My next letter will close the subject of the *ports militaires* of France.

TOULON.

Arrival of the Ex-Queen Christina at Toulon.—Officers of the Line.—Brenton's *Naval History*.—Toulon inferior to Portsmouth as a Harbour, and to Spithead as an Anchorage.—The Inner Harbour of Toulon.—The Anchorage.—Battery of La Croix and Cape Brun.—Strong and Irregular Currents in Mediterranean Sea.—Superiority of Shipping.—Jean Sobieski.—Sluggishness of the Admiralty of England.—Hints for England to be in Readiness.—The Bravery and Skill of French Officers.—French flatter themselves of the Certainty of Success in the Event of War.—An Illustration: Mons. Rossignol.—Antipathy of the French towards England.—Economy of the Whigs.—Manning of the French Navy (further particulars).—"*Génie Maritime*."—French Gunners.—Officers of the French Navy.—"*Premiers Maîtres*."—The Fleet of France in Time of Peace (of what it consists).—Character of Mons. Thiers.—Mons. de Nerciat.—Mons. J. de Marolles.—Officers Afloat.—Admirals, Major-Generals, Commissaries, of Marine, &c.—Admiral and Major-General of Brest.—Anecdote of Sir Sidney Smith.

Nov. 10, 1840.

THIS is the last letter which I shall address to you from the *ports militaires* of France. It is likely to be as diversified in its contents as the chest of

a blue jacket, and to treat *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis.* I leave this place to-morrow for Paris; and as between this and the time of my departure I may be frequently interrupted, and am bound to give the evening to society, and the morrow morning to "setting my house in order" for a long journey, you will excuse me, I know, for keeping open my despatch till the day after I shall have arrived in the capital. Many circumstances may suggest themselves to my mind in the course of my journey which would escape my attention if I were to transmit you my "missive" in the course of the evening.

Since I last wrote to you Toulon has received within her walls no less a person than the ex-Queen Christina. She arrived here on the 5th, from Marseilles, in the Mentor steamer, and was received with all the honours due to her rank, to her misfortunes, and to her near relationship to the King of the French. This was not a mere piece of empty pageantry; it was a deep diplomatic demonstration, and intended to mark the royal as well as the national disrelish for that "poor creature of the English," as the French naval and military officers are wont to call Espartero.

Should affairs take a different turn in Spain, and the intrigues now going on at Bayonne be turned to the advantage of the Queen-mother, rest

assured she will not forget to place the conduct of her relative Louis Philippe, and of his authorities, in disadvantageous contrast to the acts of British ministers and diplomatists. For the rest, nothing could be more graceful and fascinating than the bearing and demeanour of this charming woman during her sojourn at Toulon. There was an attraction in her smile, and a benignity and condescension in her manner, which won all hearts. Gallantry must, indeed, be at low ebb in Spain when so much grace and beauty are forced to wander in a foreign land. The English have the repute of being a cold and calculating people, but I misjudge my countrymen greatly, or they would have avenged at all hazards the supposed wrongs of so beautiful a woman.

"Oh! had her eye in beauty wept,
A thousand warriors forth had leapt,
A thousand swords had sheathless shone,
And made her quarrel all their own."

I must do the French marine the justice to say, that they treated Christina as a woman and a queen; and the commanders of the Ocean, the Trident, the Genereux, and the Souverain, vied with each other in those attentions which the female heart knows how to appreciate as the homage of brave and gallant men. As to the French army of the line, the officers are for the most part composed of coarse, under-bred, vulgar-

minded, and low-lived men; and it is no marvel that they neither see in the sorrows of a mother, a woman, or a queen, any thing to excite their sympathy or to awaken their compassion. Enough, however, of this subject.

Of the bay and harbour of Toulon I sent you such imperfect accounts as I could write *currente calamo* in my former letters. That I omitted some important circumstances is extremely probable; but neither the public nor the government will be in any respect losers by this omission, for if a fuller and more detailed account of the harbour and roadstead be needed, such may be found in the first volume of my late excellent and lamented friend Captain Edward Brenton's *Naval History;* and I learn, within a few days by letter, from an able and accomplished officer, that this description is deemed so accurate, that it has been copied, *in extenso*, into the more modern work of James. All these gentlemen are infinitely more competent to judge of the matter than I can possibly be; the youngest of them is at least fifteen years my senior, and I am pleased to think that they all bear me out in the opinion that either as a harbour or as a dépôt Toulon is inferior to Portsmouth, as it also confessedly is to Spithead as an anchorage. When I state that it is also surpassed by Plymouth, I may be accused by the unthinking of unduly depreciating

the French; but the fact is not really so. I am willing to admit that the engineer who constructed the dock at Toulon had great difficulties to encounter; but though the ground was full of springs, undermining his foundation, he nevertheless, by means of an inverted arch, created a dock, in which some of the largest and best ships are built. The inner harbour of Toulon is a work of art, formed by two jetties, hollow and bomb-proof, running off from the east and west sides of the town. It would easily hold 30 sail of the line, as many frigates, and an equal proportion of small craft. A boom closes the entrance at night, and another boom runs from the jetty to the town, confining all the small craft and timber on the west side of the harbour. The basin is never ruffled by any wind to occasion damage. The outer sides of the jetties present two large batteries, even with the water's edge, the worst species of fort for a ship to encounter. The space for the anchorage of ships of war in the inner road is confined, and the ground is in general foul and rocky. The great roadstead presents far better anchorage, but it is not extensive, and is unprotected from the effects of a Levanter, which throws in a heavy sea. To the eastward the bay is open and the water deep; and hence it is not to be relied on as an anchorage in all weathers. From the battery of La Croix, in the

peninsula, to Cape Brun the distance is 2000 yards. This may be taken as the extreme breadth of the great road from north to south. Such anchorage, therefore, sinks into insignificance when compared to Spithead and its contiguous roadsteads, stretching from St. Helen's to Yarmouth, a distance of twenty-five miles. Nor is the Gulf of Frejus, or Hieres Bay, though capacious and good anchorages (but without docks, arsenals, and other conveniences for the repair of ships), comparable to the Motherbank, Stoke's Bay, or the Southampton Water, capable as these are of containing 600 or 800 sail of merchant shipping.

I before observed that the Mediterranean Sea has no rise or fall of tides. It is, however, subject to strong and irregular currents, and is with its *mistral* (*semper spirantes frigora cauri*) pre-eminently treacherous, if one may so render the vernacular epithet of *Mer Traitre* so often applied to it. But these are natural disadvantages, which have been overcome by the science and skill of the nation. Most of the ships here now are of the finest classes, possessing in a superior degree the qualities of sailing and carrying their lower-deck ports. They are also superior to our own vessels in weight of metal; but at the first outbreak of war, or in three weeks afterwards, I have no doubt we, too, shall be possessed of

capital sailing-vessels; but, as I am still sojourning a stranger in the land of the Gaul, politeness forbids me to say whence we shall obtain them. When Jean Sobieski came to the relief of Vienna, then beleaguered by the Turk, one of the Austrian commanders taunted him with the ragged state of his tatterdemalion troops. "Never mind," said the brave and ready-witted Pole, "they will be all clad *à la Turque* before the war is over." Some naval Sobieski, the Cochrane or Napier of the day, will, in the event of war (which Heaven forefend), give new words to this old tune, and prove, that though at the end of 1840 our vessels had been inferior to the French in sailing and in weight of metal, yet that in a given time, without building or buying, the English ships, nevertheless, bore off the bell. This will arise from an application of the good old rule—

> "That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

And from all I have seen, heard, observed, learned, and digested in a journey of ten or twelve weeks, I have no kind of doubt of the desire, and, what is better, the ability, of my countrymen, not only to take, but to keep. I need not, however, say, that in war, as in every thing else, a great deal depends on the first blow; and he who puts spurs into the sluggish sides of our Admiralty,

crying, "Prepare, for ye know not the time nor the hour when the foe may come," is the greatest patriot and the firmest friend to the liberties of his country. It is recorded, I think of the Bohemian reformers, that they made a drum of the skin of old John Ziska to rouse the torpid energies of their countrymen; and if the skin of Robert Blake were used for the purpose of exciting Englishmen to emulate the deeds of this great admiral, we might at length awake from the "sleep of the sluggard," and be prepared for any foe, however puissant. All that I have seen in this the country of our ancient rival, and, I fear I must add, most implacable enemy, teaches me the necessity of circumspection, of jealousy, in a word, of being prepared for the worst. You are, therefore, perfectly right to sound the tocsin of alarm from one end of England to the other. The Admiralty and official people may find there is "damnable iteration" in your columns, but continue to bear down on these lazy land-lubbers; and rest assured you will be entitled to, and receive, the eternal gratitude of the navy of England. Believe not those who tell you that the French officers are neither brave nor skilful; they are both the one and the other; and though their trade bears no proportion to ours—though they are unable to manœuvre ships as we manœuvre them, I nevertheless tell you, they are

sufficiently daring to calculate on the certainty of success in the first boarding encounter in which they shall be involved with a British squadron. Most firmly do I believe that they will be mistaken — that they will be thrashed as they always have been; but it is nevertheless true, that from Dunkirk to Bayonne, from Cape Creus to Nice and Corsica, they one and all calculate on the superiority which they say they will have over us, by each French ship of war having her full complement of seamen. Nay, even within sight almost of our own coasts, they boast of this in the public streets and open highways. One fact is worth a thousand arguments. There is at Havre a fellow of the name of Rossignol, who has been for the last twenty years smuggling off the coasts of Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Cornwall, and Sussex. This man speaks English nearly as well as a native Englishman; he has made every fraction he has in the world in trading with the English; he has been indebted to the English for the kindest and best offices of friendship; yet for the last two months he "slakes his thirst for evil-speaking," by proclaiming, on the market-place and quay of Cherbourg, that the English are a parcel of lubberly blockheads, that their ships are badly officered and worse manned, and that at the first outbreak of war they will be taken, sunk, destroyed, and what not, even by such

fellows as Rossignol himself. Such rhodomontade as this is no doubt truly contemptible; but these Thrasonical boastings find an echo in every breast, and this "pigeon-livered" egg-dealer and ex-smuggler (who, I dare be sworn, is as great a poltroon as ever was soundly thrashed by Jack Tar) is looked upon as an oracle speaking with "most miraculous organ." The inhabitants of the other *ports militaires* are like those of Cherbourg, *differtum nautis cauponibus atque malignis;* and at Brest, Rochefort, L'Orient, and Toulon, they think of us as Monsieur Rossignol is wont to speak, and hate us with the same vicious, unreasoning, and distempered antipathy. As to the hatred, we can pardon it, for it takes root in the defeat at Cresy, and branches out to Waterloo; but the opinion of the English navy now rife in France is, I hesitate not to say, chiefly owing to two things—first, the miserable economy of the Whigs, and secondly, the insufficiency of our force in the Mediterranean. As to the first, the following observations appear to me so applicable, that I trust you will transfer them to your columns:—

"In a scheme for making this nation happy at home and respected abroad, formidable in war and flourishing in peace," says Mr. Burke, *State of the Nation*, "it is surely a little unfortunate for us that he has picked out the navy as the very

first object of his economical experiments. Of all the public services, that of the navy is one in which tampering may be of the greatest danger, which can worst be supplied upon an emergency, and of which any failure draws after it the longest and heaviest train of consequences. I am far from saying that this or any service ought not to be conducted with economy; but I will never suffer the sacred name of economy to be bestowed upon arbitrary defalcation of charge. The author tells us himself, 'that to suffer the navy to rot in harbour, for want of repairs and marines, would be to invite destruction.' It would be so. When the author talks, therefore, of savings on the navy estimates, it is incumbent for him to let us know, not what sums he will cut off, but what branch of that service he deems superfluous. Instead of putting us off with unmeaning generalities, he ought to have stated what naval force, what naval works, and what naval stores, with the lowest estimated expense, are to keep our marine in a condition commensurate to its great ends."*

Parsimony, in a great state, is the worst economy in the world, and had we five or six years ago kept the requisite naval force in the Mediterranean, we might have been saved some hundreds of thousand pounds in the budget of 1841.

* Burke's Works, vol. ii. pp. 104, 105.

But the spirit of a mean-minded, muddy-headed, huckstering Scotchman prevailed, and his counsels were listened to in a season when the following extract from the letters on a regicide peace should have been impressed with tenfold force on the minds of British statesmen:—

"By the express provisions of a recent treaty," says Mr. Burke, "we had engaged with the King of Naples to keep a naval force in the Mediterranean. But, good God! was a treaty at all necessary for this? The uniform policy of this kingdom as a state, and eminently so as a commercial state, has at all times led us to keep a powerful squadron and a commodious naval station in that central sea, which borders upon, and which connects a far greater number and variety of states, European, Asiatic, and African, than any other. Without such a naval force, France must become despotic mistress of that sea, and of all the countries whose shores it washes. Our commerce must become vassal on her, and dependent on her will."*

These lines were traced when France had neither Corsica nor Algiers. How much more strongly would the great statesman now express himself if he were to rise from the tomb and find our ancient rival in possession of both these de-

* Burke's Works, vol. viii. p. 312.

pendencies on that sea, which now seems, despite the discoveries of Columbus and Vasco de Gama, once more to regain its pristine importance!

Of the manner of manning the French navy I heretofore gave you some account; not, indeed, so full or ample as I could wish, but still as detailed and extensive as you could well admit into your columns. I shall now glance at the *Corps de la Marine* according to their relative importance — 1st, the officers; 2dly, the naval engineers; 3dly, the naval artillery; and 4thly and lastly, the corps of administrators and clerks. The body of naval officers was anciently styled "Grand Corps." It was created in 1664 by Louis XIV., and was composed of the *élite* of the nation. In 1756 there were 914 officers, and 500 *élèves*. In 1790, 1334 officers, and 340 *élèves*. In 1837, 47 years after, the numerical difference is not very great, for we find the officers amounting to 1263, and the *élèves* to 340.

The corps of *Génie Maritime* is altogether composed of pupils of the Polytechnic School, distinguished for their scientific attainments.

The marine artillery formerly supervised the dépôts of arms, the powder magazines, and munitions of war, and superintended the fabrication of anchors, cannons, chain-cables, &c.; but it has been recently, and, perhaps, wisely suppressed, and its place is now supplied by sailors trained

to naval gunnery. Whether these "sons of Neptune" are learned on the subject of filling and proportioning powder—whether they understand the windage of a shot, or totally forget their "gurnet,"* I will not pretend to determine, for I have not examined them; but I can aver, from having seen them fire, that they never have had the benefit of the system of instruction and experimental practice pursued on board Her Majesty's ship Excellent, in Portsmouth harbour.

The body of administrators and clerks, occupied with receipts, disbursements, &c., already too numerous, augments daily, and interrupts and embarrasses the regular march of the service by the multiplication of innumerable signatures and heaps of writing and paper work, which answers no one good purpose. All these corps are under the orders of the Minister of the Marine, who promulgates new and annuls old ordinances, appoints to commands, advances in rank, and puts on half-pay, &c., with a power almost imperial. Under the orders and eyes of this important individual are twenty-one *bureaux*, which correspond with all the outports, and centralise in Paris the whole force of the sea-service.

The officers of the French navy have, like the French army, their general, superior, and subal-

* See that excellent work the *Naval Officer's Manual*, by Captain Glasscock, title "Gunner," *passim*.

tern officers. Thus, *vice-amiraux* and *contre-amiraux* correspond to lieutenant-general and major-general, while the rank of *capitaine de vaisseau* is equivalent to the military rank of colonel. The captain of a frigate, till 1837, corresponded to the rank of lieutenant-colonel; but on the 14th of May of that year (1837), the grade of *capitaine de frégate* was suppressed.

Capitaine de corvette is equivalent to *chef de bataillon*, *lieutenant de vaisseau* to *capitaine*, and *lieutenant de frégate* (formerly *enseigne de vaisseau*), to the grade of lieutenant in the land service. Two-thirds of the officers of the French navy are recruited from the *élèves de la marine*, formerly called *aspirants*. I should also state, that the *capitaines au long cours* of the merchant service can, if they serve for two years aboard a ship of war in the rank of *enseigne auxiliaire*, stand in competition for the rank of *enseigne entretenu*.

By a law of April 1832, the *premiers maîtres* enjoy a similar privilege. I might further discourse at great length on the *maîtres*, *contre-maîtres*, and *quartiers maîtres*, but I have some regard for your space; and unless you allow me to increase the number of my communications, it were impossible to trespass on your goodness.

I shall close this part of the subject with the

nomenclature of vessels adopted in the French navy. No ship is called a *bâtiment de guerre* in France unless she carries at least 80 guns. First-rate ships have 3 decks, 4 batteries, and 120 guns. Second-rates are two-deckers, with 3 batteries of 100 guns. Ships of the third and fourth rank are also two-deckers, with 3 batteries of 80 and 90 guns.

In time of peace the fleet of France consists of 40 ships, 50 frigates, and 220 smaller vessels, thus distributed:—

10 first-rates of 120 guns.
10 second-rates of 100 guns.
15 third-rates of 90 guns.
5 fourth-rates of 80 guns.
17 frigates, first class, of 60 guns.
17 frigates, second class, of 50 guns.
16 frigates, third class, of 40 guns.

The number of ships afloat in peace is 20: 9 of these are at Toulon, 9 at Brest, and 2 at Rochefort. The number of frigates afloat is 25; but there are always on the stocks a reserve of 20 vessels and of 25 frigates. The artillery of these vessels is regulated as follows:—

First-class Ship.—The first battery carries 32 long 30-pounders; the second, 30 short 30-pounders and 4 obuses of 80; the third, 34 obuses of 30; the fourth, 16 carronades of 30, and 4 obuses of 30.

Second-class Ship.—The first battery carries 28 guns of long 30's and 4 obuses of 80; the second, 34 short 30's; the third, 30 carronades of 30 and 4 obuses of 30.

Third-class Ship.—First battery, 26 long 30-pounders and 4 obuses of 80; second battery, 32 short 30-pounders, while the forecastle is armed with 24 carronades of 30, and 4 obuses of the same calibre.

Fourth-class Ship.—First battery, 24 long 30-pounders and 4 obuses of 80; second battery, 30 short 30-pounders, with 18 carronades and 4 obuses on the forecastle.

I should observe, in concluding this part of the subject, that the universal adoption of 30-pounders in the French navy has given to vessels of the third and fourth rank such an increased developement of force as will enable them to lay alongside the largest three-decker without being overwhelmed by superior force. This is an advantage which was not possessed by the old 74, nor even the old 80-gun ship, as that intelligent and able public servant and consummate seaman, Mr. More O'Ferrall, well knows. The people of England may be well assured, that so long as this eloquent, enlightened, and truly competent secretary presides under a Minto at the Admiralty, the "wooden walls of old England" are in no danger of any single naval power, or even

the whole of Europe, in battalion against us. Thrice happy England!

I must now draw my labours to a close. It is near three weeks since you last heard from me, and within that time that *nain spirituel*—that lively little dwarf, the great disturber of the public peace of France and of Europe, has fallen from the high position which he should never have occupied. The blame, the shame, and I will add the crime, of all the recent, and, I regret to add, the still existing excitement, should fall on his head, and on his head alone. He it was who called into life all the wildness, arrogance, and presumption, which has been overruling and overawing the little of common sense which yet remains in France. His was the ministry which never allowed the heads of this vain and volatile race to cool, and which put in motion that mutinous spirit, and those myriads of self-conceited, babbling, thoughtless tongues and pens singing songs of blood and murder, and inditing columns of vulgar and senseless vituperation against perfidious Albion. He it was who supplied the perverse and undisciplined "*populaccio*" of the lowest seaports with food for fury in talking in his *salons*, and in his journals, of the deceit and dereliction of our common country; and yet all these base and lying arts have availed him nothing, either with the people

whom he deluded, or the monarch he betrayed; for he has fallen from the ministry which he disgraced, unpitied by the people, and unregretted by the sovereign whose crown he put in peril. Never since the world began did there appear on the public scene a more overrated or a more unprincipled schemer than this same M. Thiers; and, perhaps, the worst feature in the moral history of France is, that her statesmen and deputies could endure for a moment the supremacy of a man who laughs at all principle and at all theory, and whose *rouérie*, political and private, is so notorious, that it has become proverbial. The possession of considerable talent, of very great dexterity, of great readiness, sharpness, and facility of adaptation to all kinds of labour, and to every circumstance and occasion, I by no means deny him. A ready writer, he was among the first of journalists; a clear and dramatic narrator, he undoubtedly takes a high rank among the living historians of his nation, whether we regard the lucidity or the impress of life and motion which he gives to his subject: but it is not because he is the sharpest of sophists and dexterously brews falsehood and fact together—it is not because he talks in the Chamber with the volubility and the vivacity of an intriguing *femme de chambre*, that I can ever admit that he was a fitting minister of the crown

of France. Clearness and promptitude of conception he undoubtedly has, joined to a lively and vigorous style, and no man disposes his facts more dramatically; but light, volatile, and of a character the reverse of honourable or respectable, he has ever found the uniformity of fixed principle so irksome that his whole literary and political life has been but a series of shifts, intrigues, and escapades, of which the history would be more curious than edifying.

> "Mascarille est un fourbe et fourbe fourbissime
> Sur qui ne peuvent rien la crainte et le remords,
> Et qui, pour ses desseins, à d'étranges ressorts."

But this mischievous *valet fripon* has now lost his place, and as his character bears so little looking into, let us hope it will be impossible he shall ever again enter the service of a master on whom he was forced against that master's will.

To return, however, to the *ports militaires*. It will, no doubt, take a long, a very long time, to restore confidence between the nations; but let us hope that the grave and sober character of the eminent and highly-gifted statesman who now governs France may induce us to throw a veil over the events of the last three months, and to look on the past as though it had never been. If war, however, must come (which Heaven in its mercy forbid), I have a full,

hopeful, and certain reliance on the strength and power of Old England.

I cannot conclude this letter without tendering my warmest and most grateful thanks to Monsieur de Nerciat, *capitaine de vaisseau* of the first class, and to Monsieur J. de Marolles, *lieutenant de vaisseau*, who devoted three days of his valuable time to shew me the port and arsenal of Toulon. To the officers afloat in all the ships of war, in each of the five ports, I am indebted for many civilities and some hospitality. I wish them all success and promotion in their great and glorious profession.

To the Admirals, Major-Generals, Commissaries of Marine, &c., of all the other ports, I tender, individually and collectively, my most sincere thanks for many civilities received at their hands.

I will not even except the Admiral and Major-General of Brest, on both of whom I stole a march, as I announced to them I would, and as, indeed, I would do again under similar circumstances.

I was not an unknown or an unrecommended individual; but, notwithstanding their prohibition and certain unpleasant occurrences which happened the day previously, I visited the arsenal, dockyard, and *bagne*, without their per-

mission, and passed muster as a good Frenchman through forty-six *ateliers*.

There was good precedent for this. In January 1795, Sir Sidney Smith, in the Diamond, disguised his ship and crew so well as to pass for a French frigate, and, with an easterly wind, turned up into Brest water, passing twenty-four hours at the harbour's mouth. *

Sir Sidney rejoined his commodore, as I now do the active squadron called *The Times*, and I report that I am able and ready for other service as soon as need be.

* The author of these Letters was forced to return to England, on private business, in the month of November. Finding, early in November, that the agitation existing during the autumn had not subsided, and that the preparations for war still continued, he left England a second time on the 8th December, and proceeded to visit certain other ports and garrisons. The most considerable of the ports are treated of in the subsequent letters. As to the garrisons visited it is intended to incorporate them into a larger work, to be entitled *The Garrisons and Army of France.*

BOULOGNE-SUR-MER.

Arrival at Boulogne. — Its Cheerless State. — Guizot's Ministry. — The French galled at English Success. — Active Preparations for War. — Cavalry: Exportation of English Horses for French Service. — 1814, Prince Regent's Present to Louis XVIII. — Free Trade. — Danger of the Passengers, owing to the Cargo of Horses. — State of Commerce at Boulogne. — The Feelings of the People. — Strange Medal found in Ireland commemorative of the Conquest of England, and now exhibited at Boulogne. — Activity of the French in Fitting out Ships. — Dorset St. Loe's Opinion on the Quickness of their Operations in the Time of Charles II.

Dec. 9, 1840.

I ARRIVED here this morning at one o'clock, and cannot quit the place without giving you the fruits (such as they are) of what I have seen, observed, and learned. It is now five weeks since I left Boulogne. It was then cheerless and desolate; apprehension hung over the future, and vast numbers of our countrymen and countrywomen had already left. Although the Guizot ministry is infinitely more firmly established now than it was then — although the most brilliant

feats of arms have since crowned the British army, and the war in Syria may be said to be at an end; yet I regret that these manifestations of the surpassing promptitude and power of Great Britain, far from operating to calm the turbulent effervescence of the majority of Frenchmen, has only served to madden and gall them the more. We are hated with a more intense hatred than formerly, precisely for the reason that we are dreaded and feared. But though hatred and fear of us lie close to the hearts of all those who clamour aloud for war, there is nothing on their lips but epithets of contumely and contempt. I do not deny that the higher commercial classes, and some of the shopkeepers, lament this temper of the national mind; but they are overborne by that vulgar, vaunting, drum-beating, gasconading gang of ambitious privates, and envious, sour-minded *sous-officiers*, who are the plague of France, and who will become the pest of Europe, unless they are silenced and put down.

The preparations for war continue in this town and neighbourhood with unabated activity. Batteries have been placed along the jetty and behind the baths of M. Mancel, but, *maugre* all these boastful preparations, I do not hesitate to say that a couple of frigates, with 800 or 1000 marines, could take all these batteries, and turn them against and destroy the town itself in a very few

hours. That this sad necessity may never arise I most fervently pray; but how, I ask, are you—how is any Englishman who walks the streets of Boulogne, fed with English gas, and pampered into something like a decent town, from being a wretched fishing village, by English capital—how is an Englishman to put a bit and bridle into the jaws of those creatures, spurred, mustachioed, and leather-breeched, who trail their long cavalry swords along the *pavé*, unless he tells them the whole truth, not by mouthfuls only, but solidly and in the lump?

Apropos of cavalry. Is it not monstrous that a contract for 1300 English horses should be in the course of execution for the last seven weeks at 880f., or 35*l.* 4*s.* 2*d.* per horse, and that not a single morning journal should have called attention to the subject? Already 635 of these horses have been delivered—620 from London, and 15, at one o'clock to-day, from Dover. In 1814, the then Prince Regent presented to Louis XVIII. 1000 of our best cavalry horses to mount his *gardes du corps*, but it is a fact (which any military man who was at that battle will, I believe, aver) that every one of these steeds so presented was at Waterloo. Not only, therefore, are we (with this fact before us) impoverishing our own steeds and crippling, perhaps, our own resources, but we are furnishing to our most dangerous—I

fear our most inveterate, and certainly most proximate, rival, the means of mounting one of the most formidable branches of his army. Some of the Peter* M'Culloch school may prate to me by the hour, *en revanche*, of free trade. I say of freed trade as my shrewd and able friend General Bugeaud said of the "Marseillaise,"—"It is a tune which I very much like in proper season, but I never knew the singing of it to win a battle." Independently, however, of mere national considerations, I have no hesitation in saying that there are other grounds on which this traffic should be put a stop to. In the first place, the 635 horses which have already been delivered have all been sent hither by the packets, in batches of 20 each, on which a freight of 2*l.* per horse is charged. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that in foul weather no packet is safe with such a cargo. But, what of that? In this liberal age of free trade and political economy, it is better that a cargo of English men and women should go to the bottom

I beg Mr. M'Culloch's pardon. His name, I am told, is John, which I *ought* to have known. That I *ought* to have known it would, I think, be difficult to prove. I will merely, however, say, *en passant*, that Cobbett, in his pure and racy English, has given to the politico-economic fantasies of *Peter* M'Culloch an immortality, which may be rivalled, but cannot be surpassed, by the labours of *John* M'Culloch, compiler of the very useful Commercial and Geographical Dictionaries.

than that the dashing dragoons and *gentils hussards* of France should go unmounted. It has been said that "ridicule is the test of truth," and so perhaps it is in many cases, but I confess I was much more disposed to be indignant than to be humorous last night in a heavy sea and deep ground-swell, detained, as I was, 17 hours on my passage (in lieu of 11 or 12), in consequence of these said horses. Had we been half-an-hour later, we must inevitably have lost our tide, and been obliged to put into Ramsgate. Wherefore? That the cavalry of the King of the French might be well-mounted, and that the officers thereof might have the opportunity of railing in terms more coarse than complimentary at the gross stupidity of a nation, which, in such a season, gives to a rival and armed, and still arming, the power, if necessary, of meeting them, if not with English weapons, certainly mounted on English steeds. More on this subject I will not say for the present, for I believe the English public will remain quiescent on the subject until their attention is forcibly drawn to it by some startling calamity, such as the loss of a Dover or Boulogne packet. Then the whole truth will come out; these packets will cease to take cavalry horses, and cavalry horses will cease to be sent; but before that epoch arrives two full regiments may be superbly mounted. For the steam companies it is a most profitable

trade, for they have not only the horses sent, but the horses rejected, at 2*l.* a-head, and this is a more profitable freight than the featherless biped called man.

Commerce is here in a deplorable state. Confidence is entirely departed, and within the last month there have been more than thirty failures. An intelligent and prudent tradesman, to whom I was speaking this morning, counted me seven in his own street. As usual in periods of political excitement and stagnation of trade, all sorts of rumours are rife. To-day there is a report of a rising yesterday at Cherbourg, as there was yesterday of an *émeute* at Paris. I need not say that both rumours are wholly destitute of foundation. To-day, in the broad glare of a meridian sun, a foolish fellow paraded the Grande Rue, bellowing "*Vive l'Empéreur*" at the top of his cracked and reedy voice; but as he was known for a confirmed drunkard, and to have been injured by a wound in the head, no one paid the slightest attention to him. In fact, the Boulonnais are very much *abattu* and down-hearted, and curse the evil day when that mannikin statesman, little Thiers, attempted to jockey Europe, pretty much in the fashion he used to adopt with the *brigand* booksellers of Paris. Metternich and Palmerston are, however, different men from Ladvocat and Gosselin. Thiers, however, has but one standard.

He looks at all mankind through the spectacles of an Old Bailey barrister.

The removal of the ashes of Napoleon excites but little attention here. As I said, there is a settled gloom for the loss of material interests, and your Gaul is infinitely more sensitive in the matter of the pocket than in the article of patriotism. He will dole you out euphonous and *grandiose* epithets by the yard, and talk an infinite deal of nothing, because the *flux débouche* is a necessity of his garrulous nature; but he will not go ten miles out of his way, much less to Courbevoie, to see these post-posthumous honours, if I may so call them. But the phrase, "Il nous faudrait un tel homme, Grand Dieu, surtout à l'heure qu'il est," is in the mouth of every body. Nay, in conversing to-day with one of the Garde Nationale (who was among the foremost in firing on the Louis Napoleon crew), the man expressed himself thus:—"Ce cher homme, ce brave Montholon, demande assister à la cérémonie, et à coup sur on ne lui refusera pas. Non, mon cher monsieur, vous conviendrez avec moi que ce serait lâche, atroce même de la part du ministère." Yet, three little months ago, this sympathising shopkeeper did his best to send a bullet through the cranium of "ce cher Montholon." I fear I gabble and become wearisome; but I wish to

give you a sample of the people, *varium et mutabile semper*, with whom you have to deal.

Though I have been familiar with this town and neighbourhood, I am sorry to say, for nearly twenty years, yet I never visited the Museum till to-day. "The longer one lives the wiser one grows," says the proverb; and certainly I am wiser to-day than I was yesterday. Yesterday I was not aware that *le Grand Napoleon* had ever conquered England, but to-day I have no doubt of the fact; for I have seen with my own eyes a medal struck in London (at least if I am to believe the inscription) commemorative of the fact. The following is the description of this marvellous bit of copper—I beg your pardon, *brass*: "*Au droit*," says the description, "*est la tête de Napoleon, et au revers Hercule* (meaning Napoleon), *soulevant de terre et étouffant entre ses bras une figure moitié homme et moitié poisson!*" (signifying England.)

Beneath are these words: "*Descente en Angleterre, frappée à Londres en* 1804.—*Dénon direxit.*"

Strange enough, this marvellous medal, which may belie and falsify history in after ages, was dug up in Ireland, probably in the neighbourhood of some of O'Connell's "best peace-preservers," who always can be relied on in time of

need. In speaking of the subject I must somewhat alter the well-known lines—

> "The thing, indeed, is very rich and rare,
> One wonders how the d—l it got there."

I observe that there is much crowing and glorification on the part of the ministerial press at the affair of Acre, and a sneering tone adopted towards the French navy. This, believe me, is misplaced; and in order to prove to you that it is so, I will quote the words of Dorset St. Loe, the lieutenant of the Phœnix, in the time of Charles II. This officer was taken by the French in 1690, and carried into Brest, where he remained three years in captivity. At the end of that period he published a memoir on the French navy, which is in every respect true at the present day. "While I was at Brest," says he,* "I was astonished at the expedition used by the French in manning and fitting out the ships, which till then I thought could be done nowhere sooner than in England, where we have ten times the shipping, and consequently ten times more seamen than they have in France. But there I saw twenty sail of ships, of about sixty guns each, got ready in twenty days' time. They were brought in, and the men discharged, and, upon an order

* Vide Charnock, *Biographia Navalis.*

from Paris, they were careened, keeled up, rigged, victualled, manned, and out again, in the said time, with the greatest ease imaginable. I likewise saw a ship of 100 guns had all her guns taken out there in four or five hours' time, which I never saw done in England in twenty-four hours, and this with greater ease and less hazard."

Here is an authority which bears out to the letter all the observations I have been addressing to you since September the 12th.

But enough on the subject of the navy. You shall soon hear from me on the subject of the equally important "Army of France."*

* These letters are now in course of preparation, and may, if this volume be well received, be given to the public at no distant time.

DUNKIRK.

Origin of the Name Dunkirk.—Battle of the Dunes.—Cromwell and Louis XIV.—Sale of Dunkirk.—Reconstruction of the Fortifications by Vauban.—The Population.—A Second Census of the Population.—The City: its Beauty and Cleanliness.—M. Cordier.—Improvement of the Port, and Finishing of the Dock.—Harbour and Anchorage.—French Engineers.—The Canal and Docks.—The Quays.—Admiral Keppel and Lord Howe.—The Funeral of Napoleon.—Singing of the "Marseillaise."—Follies of the French Press.—Calumny against the English.

Dec. 18, 1840.

THE threatening aspect of the political hemisphere induces me to address to you a few more letters from the "Ports of France," before I enter on the vaster subject of the garrisons and military organisation of this country. And to speak truly, since I have read the almost semi-official article in the *Débats*, a letter from Dunkirk seemed to me so opportune, that, even at the risk of not being present at Napoleon's funeral, I have made a journey to this part of the kingdom. My movements must of necessity be so hurried, in order to arrive in Paris in time for the funeral ceremony,

that it is possible I shall not be enabled to finish this communication till after the evening of the 15th; but all this is very immaterial to you and your readers, provided you obtain correct information. I will not trouble you with lengthened historical details. Had I even the leisure to dwell on such subjects, I must run the risk of being often incorrect; for I do not, like many travellers, carry a portable library, and it is difficult for the passing stranger to gain access to works of reference, even in a country where such are to be found in abundance, which (*soit dit en passant*) is not the case in France.

The name of Dunkirk is of Flemish origin, and signifies "Church of the Downs," or "Church of the Sand-banks." The coasts of ancient Flanders between Dunkirk and Nieuport are covered with small hillocks of sand, which are called in French *dunes*. It was in the middle of this chain of little mountains, as the French call them (for every molehill is here a mountain), that the battle of the *Dunes* was fought on the 14th of June, 1658. An alliance against Spain had been formed between Cromwell and Louis XIV., by which it was agreed that the French army should lay siege to the town, while the English fleet blockaded the port. The Protector, who, notwithstanding the crimes by which he was stained, was always solicitous for the aggrandisement of his

country, had stipulated that the price of his co-operation should be paid by the surrender of the town itself to the Commonwealth of England; and all-usurper as he was, Cromwell compelled the Most Christian King, then the most powerful monarch in the universe, to accede to these terms, so favourable to the power and glory of Great Britain. I am not one of those who see nothing to praise but in times long gone by; but in looking at the career of this bold, bad man, I am forced to admit that in no one instance did he allow the supremacy of England to be questioned or trifled with, and I think I am justified in inferring, that if such a semi-official article as has recently appeared in the *Débats* had been printed in his time, he would have directed his ambassador to demand explanations; and if these were not found satisfactory, Blake would not only have swept the French coasts from sea to sea by his command, but have destroyed the harbours of Brest, Rochefort, and Toulon.

You have recently so well remarked on the sale of Dunkirk in 1662 to Louis XIV., that it would be a work of supererogation for me to dwell on that shameful page in our history. It was shortly after that sale that *Le Grand Monarque* visited Dunkirk, and made it a free port. Vauban was then directed to reconstruct the fortifications, and to make a census of the population. The

total number of the inhabitants amounted at that period to 10,515, among whom there were but 10 advocates, 10 attorneys, 8 notaries, 4 doctors, 14 surgeons, 6 apothecaries, 2 booksellers, 2 printers, 9 coast-pilots, and 11 ship-carpenters. Now the number of ship-carpenters alone equals double the amount of all these trades and professions.

A second census of the population was made in 1695, when it was found to amount to 11,325; in 1696, it was 12,739; in 1706, 14,274; and it is in 1840 nearly double that number, amounting to 26,000 inhabitants. Dunkirk is the second city in importance in the Department du Nord, as it unquestionably is the first in point of beauty and cleanliness. The streets are regular, and, perhaps, the best paved in all France; while the number of squares reminds one of the Dutch towns. As far as my observation extends, however, it seems to me a mistake to say, "that the marine resources of the place have not been restored or improved," as I read in a leading article of *The Times* of the 14th instant. The government of the Restoration, and especially the government of Charles X., spent considerable sums in the improvement of the port and harbour: and under the direction of M. Cordier, chief engineer of the department, sluices were constructed with a view to clear away the shifting

sands at the mouth of the harbour, forming as they did a bar, preventing the entrance of vessels of the smallest tonnage. This useful work was supposed to be accomplished so long back as September 1827, when Charles X. was present at the opening of the sluices; but the sand has since considerably accumulated. So much for French sluice-makers. They order these matters better in Holland. Workmen have, however, been engaged since 1832 in the improvement of the port, and in the finishing of a dock commenced by Napoleon; but there is still, no doubt, much to accomplish in reference to both these operations. It is not, however, to be inferred that much has not been already done here in the way of improvement because the Véloce did not make good her anchorage in the gale of last August, for that may have arisen from a combination of causes having little relation to the defects of the harbour itself. In the first place, I believe there was not sufficient coal aboard the steamer to feed the engine; and secondly, the engineer was, if I am rightly informed, a Frenchman.

The engineers of all the commercial steamboats in France are Englishmen, but the captains of some of the goverment steamers have lately, in the plenitude of their arrogant self-conceit, adopted the plan of having none but Frenchmen as engineers, and dearly have they paid for this

temerity, one of the finest boats in the Mediterranean having, in consequence had her engine entirely spoiled. Be this, however, as it may, Dunkirk with its harbour and canal, the last but a quarter of a league from the sea (and which may be entered by vessels at high tide), with its two large docks, with its ample marine magazines and spacious quays, is admirably calculated to supply to France the want of such a place as Antwerp. Here steamers and privateers without number might be launched; and from what I have seen of the population, I should say that the smugglers, the crews of the whalers, and a great number, indeed I might say a majority of the fishermen, desire nothing more than the opportunity of coming again *aux prises avec ces chiens d'Anglais*. It may be said that I exaggerate; but you will judge whether I do so or not after having read the following extract from a small work just published, called *Droits des Marins, par M. B. Hude, Ancien Capitaine*, and which is in the hands of the whole maritime population. Speaking of steam-boats the author says:—

"On voudra bien nous accorder d'émettre ici la manière dont nous envisageons son utilité réelle. Ce moyen, sans doute, présente de magnifiques avantages pour établir une concurrence dans le commerce par mer, en ce qu'il avantagera les

négociants d'un prompt transport de marchandises et d'une grande économie sur le frêt; par le raison que leurs débouchés seront plus grands et plus rapides; voilà déjà un avantage qu'on peut en retirer pour le commerce. Mais il en est un autre pour l'état; c'est celui, dans un cas de guerre avec l'Angleterre, ou toute autre puissance maritime, d'armer ces bâtiments à vapeur, et de les expédier en coureurs pour aller inquiéter le commerce Anglais sur tous les points de la navigation."

That *cas de guerre avec l'Angleterre* may be much nearer than the million suppose: but it will be at least something new to the people of Great Britain, and newest of all to "poor Jack," to learn that his country not only fears, but acknowledges the superiority of the navy of France!

Hear Captain Hude:—

"Pour contenir l'Angleterre dans ses limites, et lui prouver que nous ne lui devons pas obéissance, parce qu'elle n'est pas encore à notre hauteur, nous n'avons qu'une puissance à lui opposer, et cette puissance elle la craint: c'est la marine, dont elle reconnait la supériorité."

Can I do better in reply to this *fatras* of French fury and fustian than advise my countrymen in the language of Fox in his speech on the state of the navy in 1795?

"It is the true policy of England to encourage as many landsmen as possible to enter the sea service. When I hear talk of an invasion—an event which I had not been accustomed to regard with great apprehension—I must own that I would feel much more secure from a certain superiority at sea than from any number of land forces."*

This "certain superiority at sea," *coute qui coute*, we must always continue to maintain, and more at the present moment than in any former period of our history; for I tell you that in every maritime town of France there is a savage and untameable hatred against our name and nation, a restless desire to injure and annoy us, a feverish impatience, a vicious and distempered energy, which is the more dangerous from the wildness, arrogance, and presumption with which it is accompanied. Perverse and undisciplined in their habits, smugglers not less from necessity than from choice, the maritime population of this portion of the north of France never can become, until they are summarily chastised, humble, peaceful, and laborious members of society. Are we, then, to permit them to plant a maritime fortress opposite our shores, giving them an easier ingress to the Thames and the Medway? Sorry should I be to curtail France of any portion of

* Fox's Speeches, vol. v. p. 353.

her just and legitimate influence, but the difference is great between a plan for our own security and the humiliation of France.

What, I ask, are our Government and Admiralty doing? Have explanations been demanded as to the meaning of the semi-official article in the *Débats?* Is England again to be threatened in the Channel as she was in 1781, and are we to breathe no whisper of dissatisfaction? Is it not better promptly and at once to demand explanations than to be obliged to recur to those extreme measures which ended in the glorious victory of the 12th of April, 1782? Let Lord Minto have a care what he is about. In April 1779, there was a motion made for the removal of Lord Sandwich from the Admiralty, and those great seamen Admiral Keppel and Lord Howe both voted in favour of it. Such a motion may be again made in April 1841, and with still better success.

I know there is an economical clique in England composed of the most ignorant and narrow-minded of mankind, who will clamour against the expense of keeping our coasts in a state of defence; but I answer such people in the language of Burke, "That war and economy are things not easily reconciled" (the *Débats* calls the actual state of things a *paix armée*); "and that the attempt of leaning towards parsimony in such a state as England is, may be the worst

management, and in the end, the worst economy in the world, hazarding the total loss of all the charge incurred, and of every thing along with it."*

The funeral of Napoleon excited, and still excites, the public mind here, in a much greater degree than either at Calais or Boulogne. No nation could have behaved more nobly, more magnanimously, than England in surrendering the bones of the Corsican despot; but this ready compliance with the fantasy of this fickle nation, far from rendering them grateful or civil, has only served to render their spirit more arrogant, self-conceited, and mutinous.

Hear on this subject Capitaine Hude, in his *Droit des Marins*, and then judge for yourselves how long the *paix armée* is likely to last:—

"Qui ne comprend la joie que dut éprouver l'Angleterre quand le dieu des combats se fut remis avec confiance à son honneur et à sa discrétion? Qui n'a pas lu ces pages où sont écrites, les unes après les autres, toutes les humiliations qu'elle a fait subir à l'homme extraordinaire qui avait osé la ménacer et imposer des digues à son ambition? Comme le cœur de l'Anglais a tressailli de bonheur quand cette magnifique intelligence, qui avait voulu re-

* *Observations on a late State of the Nation.* Burke's Works, vol. ii. p. 59.

streindre son pouvoir, fut étendue sans vie sous la masse imposante du rocher de Sainte Hélène; et quel cri de délivrance dut pousser la nation entière quand Dieu rappela à lui ce génie profond et sublime, qui avait tenu si longtemps l'univers dans l'admiration? L'Angleterre s'était encore vengée; mais elle s'est vengée par un crime dont rien ne pourra effacer la souillure; elle découvrit aux yeux de tous un cœur lâche et plein de fiel, et viola le plus saint des préceptes, la loi la plus magnanime — celle de l'hospitalité."

But this is not all. There has been recently published by Pilout, with the approbation and under the patronage of the Minister of Marine, a work called the *Almanac du Marin* for 1841, in which there has been inserted for the *nonce* an article called the *Derniers Jours de l'Empéreur*, in which I find the following sentence:—

" Napoleon continuait à traiter avec le capitaine du Bellérophon, noble sentiment qui l'a conduit à de longues et bien douloureuses, souffrances. Dans la soirée seulement nous fûmes informés qu'il allait nous quitter et prendre passage sur le Bellérophon, pour se rendre en Angleterre. Cette nouvelle nous causa un délirant désespoir, et nous inspira un instinctif sentiment de crainte pour la liberté et peut-être pour la vie de l'Empéreur. Notre confiance dans la géné-

rosité du gouvernement de Georges était, en effet, loin de ressembler à celle de Bonaparte.

" C'en était fait: la captivité du grand homme avait commencé, ses chaînes étaient rivées, et la mort même n'a pu les briser, puisque ses nobles cendres sont restées jusqu'à ce jour prisonnières sur le rocher où ses bourreaux lui ont arraché la vie."

If these were the words of some incendiary of the noxious and nonsensical *National*, one might pass them by unheeded; but no, they are the deliberately penned opinions of Monsieur J. M. Feillet, Ancien Commissaire de la Marine, and they are printed in a work published with the approbation, and under the patronage, of the Naval Minister! Nor is the article of M. Feillet the only false and offensive one, for the paper immediately following, entitled " Ile Sainte Hélène," and written by Normand, *lieutenant de vaisseau*, is scarcely less false or less reprehensible.

The singing of the " Marseillaise" still continues. A body of young conscripts marched into Calais two days ago, bellowing it forth in full chorus; and I have since heard that it has been sung every night at the theatre of Lille. Scarcely a night passes that one's ears are not split here with this infernal air.

It is not for me to display before you the mendacious activity of the Parisian press. I leave

that task to your Paris correspondent; but a Paris journal has just now fallen into my hands, which entertains its readers with the story of an Englishman having gone to Chevets* on the morning of the 15th of December, the day of the funeral of the late Napoleon Buonaparte, offering any price for an eagle, in order that he might eat the bird stuffed with truffles between plum-pudding and the "Charlotte Russe," in order to prove his hatred and contempt for the emblem of the dead Emperor.

And this is the wretched disgusting trash with which *la grande nation* is entertained! Half the readers of the journal take the story *au pied de la lettre*, and, though they have no faith in anything else, believe any calumny, however absurd, against John Bull.

I will not lose sight of Douay, St. Omer, Lille, and Valenciennes, in giving you an account of the army of France.

* A famous *magasin de comestibles* in the Palais Royal.

ST. SERVAN.

French Navy Establishments at Dunkirk.—Frigates formerly built there.—Difficulty of Navigating the Channel of Dunkirk.—Corvettes, Brigs, and Smaller Craft, now built there.—*Bassin à Flot*, and its Sluices.—The Commercial Port.—*Fort Risbau* and *Levirs*.—Jean Barthe and Count Forbin.—Ignorance of Democratical Frenchman's Opinions.—Daniel Defoe on the Port and Fortifications of Dunkirk.—Gravelines, its Town and Harbour.—Defence of the *embouchure* of the Seine.—Francis I.—St. Servan.—The Dock-Yard of Solidor.—The Floating Dock between St. Malo and St. Servan.—The Baron Tupinier.—Trade of the Malouins to Newfoundland.—Excellence of the Seamen on this Coast.—Records of the Admiralty of St. Malo, La Bourdonnaye, Duguay Trouin.

January 2, 1841.

SINCE I wrote to you from Dunkirk, I have visited Gravelines, Nantes, Bordeaux, and Bayonne. I mean to give you some of the fruits of my observations in the present letter, and if possible to conclude the subject in a communication which I shall address to you three or four days hence.

You are aware, that independently of the great

military ports of Toulon, Brest, L'Orient, Rochefort, and Cherbourg, the French navy has establishments at Dunkirk, Havre, St. Servan, Nantes, Bordeaux, and Bayonne, and of these it shall be my task to give you a sort of *coup d'œil* in the present letter.

The establishments at Dunkirk are on an extensive scale. They consist in a sluice dock, a slip for building ships, houses wherein the workmen are lodged, and workshops sufficiently extensive for the building and arming of ships of war. Formerly Dunkirk was the *chef lieu* of a maritime prefecture, and frigates were built there as well as at L'Orient or Rochefort, but the difficulty of the navigation of the channel which communicates with the sea has induced the French government to confine the building operations to corvettes, brigs, and smaller craft. In a former letter I informed you of the sums which had been recently laid out in repairing the *bassin à flot* and its sluices. These are now in a good state, and so long as the *paix armée* continues, you may rest assured that they will be kept in perfect repair. The merchants and marines are also talking of taking immediate measures to render the commercial port easier of access as well as deeper, and I have no doubt, that in the present temper of men's minds, this work will soon be set about in right earnest. From either of the

wooden jetties there is an excellent view of the roadstead. Beyond it is a sand-bank, in the middle of which a canal has been perfected. This canal is in reality the port, which is filled at high tide, but becomes considerably more shallow at ebb. It would easily contain thirty ships of war. Both the jetties are defended by batteries—the one called Fort Risbau, and the other Le Levirs. They are advantageously placed, and have recently undergone the inspection of a celebrated engineer.

During the continuance of peace, the military marine (as the French navy is absurdly called) has made but little use of the port of Dunkirk; but I hesitate not to state, that if war should break out it would become a formidable station of steam-boats and privateers. During the ministry, of that mischievous and dwarfish demagogue Thiers, several applications were made to the Minister of the Marine for letters of marque; and all these applications, if I am rightly informed, met with prompt attention.

A blustering, burly sort of *bourgeois*, who was in this particular my informant, and who has a couple of vessels engaged in the whale-fishery, took especial care to tell me that they had pilots at Dunkirk who knew every creek and cranny in the Thames as well as Tom Bushell or Billy Jones, and that two of these could pass for

Englishmen in any quarter of the world. "But," said he, "they are not Englishmen, but of the real stuff of which Jean Barthe, who was of our town, was made, and he, you know, took Plymouth." "Pardon me," said I, "but if my memory serves me rightly, you make a slight mistake. Jean Barthe did not take Plymouth, but was taken into it with Count Forbin very much against his will; but he was, nevertheless, a brave and excellent sailor."

It was in vain to reason with my *bourgeois*. He had read the whole account in the history of Louis XVI.! though every child in England, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, knows that Jean Barthe died long before Louis XVI. was born.

I cite you this trait, slight in itself, but sufficiently significant. In the first place, it affords evidence, if such were wanting, of the feelings of the maritime population towards England; and in the second place, it demonstrates the profound ignorance of the great majority of democratical Frenchmen; for this *bellipotent bourgeois* (I mean no pun) may be taken as a fair specimen of the great majority of the tribe of democratic Frenchmen. Lively, quick-witted, turbulent, energetic, they certainly are in a high degree, but withal of an ignorance so crass (to use a favourite word of Lord Brougham), of a judgment so feeble, as to

pass all human understanding. To the sober-minded nations of the north they appear but as so many spoiled children of a larger growth. I will conclude my observations on Dunkirk by begging of you to recall to your readers the words of that shrewd, and sagacious-minded, and most able political writer, Daniel Defoe, on the subject of this port. "If the French are allowed to possess Dunkirk," said he, "we should insist that the fortifications should be destroyed, and that it should be in no respect, either by land or by sea, a battery to be turned against us." I know not whether I quote correctly, for here I have no means of reference; but I am pretty sure I give you the substance of Defoe's remarks.

Gravelines is about equidistant from Calais and Dunkirk. In two short hours you reach it from either the one or the other town. Since the peace of the Pyrenees, Gravelines has always been under the dominion of France. The town has been successively visited by Philip Augustus, by Louis XIV., Louis XV., and Napoleon Buonaparte. The latter, like Vauban (who here conducted his first siege), laid much stress on the fort of Gravelines, for they both alike saw it might be formed into a harbour of refuge, either in a period of war or when vessels could not make Calais, Dunkirk, or Boulogne. For some years back public attention has been directed very much

to this point, and the military and commercial importance of the place is now in what is queerly called the *paix armée* more than ever felt. From 1831 to 1836, 122,000f. have been expended on the harbour of Gravelines, and the inhabitants of the vicinage still call aloud for a fresh outlay. Heretofore they have been ably supported in the Chamber by M. de La Martine, menaced as they were by continual inundations. Whether he will support them now, when their voices are almost unanimously raised for war and conquest is more than I can determine; but looking to his antecedents, I should think not, for the *bourgeoisie* in general talk in the stilted style of Louis XIV., and dream of making Gravelines one of the great keys of the kingdom. Vauban, say they, was directed, 180 years ago, to render our town inaccessible on the side of the sea, and impregnable by land. By means of sluices we could inundate, as was then proposed, the surrounding country, and defend the place against the English with a garrison of 3000 men. These observations were made to me in as many different forms by half-a-dozen inhabitants; and a seventh, after having entertained me for half-an-hour with the grossest abuse of the English ministry, softened down occasionally with a word or two in favour of the nation (precisely in reference to those matters in which the poor man had egregiously mistaken and mis-

understood the national sentiment), concluded his discourse by reading the following words from a late *Constitutionnel*, which he said expressed the inmost feelings of the great majority of the inhabitants of the Pas de Calais: — "*Chacun sait au fond ou est le véritable ennemi de la France, et sur quel terrain il faudra tot au tard* (so much for the anomalous *paix armée*, which is certainly a solecism in international law), *aller le chercher. La mer cette grande route du monde voilà, le théatre des futures guerres.*" On reading these lines, I am not surprised to learn that the English ministry are offering bounties even to Greek seamen. If they be not prepared for every emergency, they may pay the penalty of their ignorant temerity very dearly. You will not, however, suppose, notwithstanding great provocation, that I answered my Gravelines or Dunkirk friends with any bitterness or asperity. I merely reminded them that, according to their own plans, the water which they would be forced to drink would reduce their 3000 men in three months, without any English gold or perfidy, which account for every Gallic reverse since Crecy, to less than 300.

I have so recently written to you from Havre that I shall merely say that, in the event of war, precautions have been taken for the defence of the *embouchure* of the Seine. The sensible, the intelligent, and the wealthy portion of the popu-

lation, view the present temper of the public mind with equal apprehension and regret, but they are overborne by the giddy, gabbling, feather-brained fools, who have the word glory in their mouths, but the thirst of gold and plunder in their hearts.

Notwithstanding the folly of these hot-brained, headstrong *fanfarons*, it would be well for the English people to bear in mind, that it was from this port that Francis I. meant to have landed in England, and that during the war of the Revolution a vast number of frigates and other vessels were also constructed at Havre. It is true our cruisers prevented the greater part of them from ever leaving the roadstead; but now that steam has become almost all-powerful, our vigilance, precaution, and daring, must be doubled.

I mean to close this letter with a few words on St. Servan, where the naval establishments are very considerable. During the war a number of good frigates were constructed here, and the flotilla of Boulogne was hence reinforced with *canonnières* and *peniches*.

The dockyard of Solidor contains five slips, three of which are appropriated to the construction of frigates. A very considerable expenditure has lately been incurred, to group around this establishment all the means and appliances necessary for the construction and armament of ships of war. A large dépôt of timber has been

established in the creek of Troquetin, and precautions have been recently taken to place the vessels in slip out of the reach of the spring-tides, from the influence of which they had been hitherto unsheltered. Three frigates and a corvette have been on the stocks for some time. You are aware that a vote of the Chambers in June 1836 sanctioned the project of establishing a floating dock between St. Malo and St. Servan, by means of a sluice dyke, which will henceforth unite the towns, giving to them a common port of greater extent than either heretofore possessed. This work is now in progress of completion, and may be finished before the end of next year. I need not say that in time of war the navy of France and the Government steamers would, by means of this basin, be enabled to afford to the coasting trade a protection, which they could not always give during the late war. Nor would its use be simply defensive, for it might be made offensive too; all the auxiliary maritime resources of the old establishment of Talard being incorporated with those of Solidor.

The Baron Tupinier, Councillor of State, Member of the Council of the Admiralty, Director of the Ports of France, and Deputy of the Charente Inférieure, has exerted all his influence to infuse fresh activity into these operations. In

his report to the Minister of the Marine he recommends, during peace, the practice of a strict economy in all the smaller ports, in order that, in the event of a war, the navy of France may be enabled to avail itself of resources augmented by a wise and prudent frugality.

The Malouins still drive a profitable trade with Newfoundland; still stand in the first rank of French seamen; and hunger and thirst for the opportunity of rivalling those exploits which are carefully handed down from father to son. They, one and all, tell you that the records of the Admiralty of their town prove that from 1688 to 1697 they captured 162 *vaisseaux d'escorte* from the English and Dutch, and 3384 merchant vessels.

"And," say they, "why should not we, who produced a Labourdonnaye capable of making head against the military power of England in India, and a Duguay Trouin capable of meeting Englishmen on their own peculiar element, fear Great Britain now, when her navy is neglected, and when a long peace has unaccustomed her to wield the trident of Neptune?"

These are the sentiments which pervade every breast, which are fostered and encouraged by the local authorities, and which would have glowed into a fierce and irrepressible flame under the

ministry of M. Thiers. The flame is not now certainly so violent as it was six weeks ago, but it still burns steadily, and a breath will fan it into a far-extending fire. Under such circumstances it behoves England to be vigilant, awake, and prepared.

Of Nantes and Bordeaux I shall speak in my next letter.

BAYONNE.

Monsieur Hubert, and Progress of Boat-building in France. —Reasons for the Establishment of the *Usine* at Indret. —Mons. Gengembre.—French Skill in Naval and Military Operations. —Cost of the Establishment at Indret for the last Ten Years.— Amount of Prime Cost for the Manufacture of Six Steamers. —The *Chantier de Construction.* — Price of Wood for Ship-building. — Wages of Master-Smiths, &c. — *Ateliers des Subsistances* at Bordeaux. — Mons. Appert.—Former Ship-Builders of Bordeaux.—Sandbar at the Mouth of the Adour.—Vain Attempt to remove it. — Government Magazines, &c., on the Banks of the Adour.—State of the Fortifications of Bayonne. — Opinions and Feelings of the Inhabitants of Bayonne. —The Ex-Commissary of the Marine.— M. Le Baron de la Gatinerie. — Bayonne Head Quarters of the Twentieth Military Division.—Mr. Harvey, the English Consul.

January 6, 1841.

Some days ago, I addressed you a letter giving an account of the actual state of the naval and maritime establishments at Dunkirk, Havre, St. Servan, &c., I hope to nearly finish the subject in the present communication, by entering into some details, which at the present juncture can-

not fail to be interesting, concerning Nantes, Bordeaux, and Bayonne.

Though the port of Nantes (of which I made some mention in a letter addressed to you early in October) is of considerable commercial importance, yet, in so far as the French navy is concerned, that importance is limited to the establishment formed on the Isle of Indret, at a few leagues from Nantes, for the construction of steam-boats and steam-engines.

When the French Admiralty became agreed on the necessity of building steamers for the service of the government, there was not a single convenience in any of the five *ports militaires* for the commencement of the work. The *Conseil d'Amirauté* had recourse in this emergency to individual enterprise, and engines from 80 to 160 horse-power were prepared for the government in private establishments. These were found exceedingly defective; and consequently the Nageur, the Souffleur, and the Pelican, though constructed on excellent principles, and under the superintendence of the engineer, Marestier (who had made a journey to England and America to study steam-ship building), were found in practice to be exceedingly bad boats.

Shortly afterwards, M. Hubert was sent by the French Government to Liverpool, with a

view to enter into an agreement with Messrs. Fawcett and Preston for the delivery at Rochefort of one of their best engines. M. Hubert drew the model of the vessel for which this engine was destined. She was built under his orders at Rochefort; and English engineers having come over to fit in the engine, France thenceforth possessed in the Sphynx an excellent model, from which period all her progress at Indret may be dated. This is the real history of steam-boat building in France; and let no stupid *soi-disant* economist tell me it is without its moral. Within twelve little years, the country in which I am now sojourning was without a single steam-boat of her own construction—without a single model in any of her arsenals, and now, thanks to the system of free trade, as it is called, she has forty-six or forty-eight at her disposition, and could easily call as many more into requisition in the ports of Havre, Nantes, Bordeaux, and Marseilles, should the smouldering fire of the *paix armée* be blown into a *guerre ouverte*. Determined no longer to be tributary to foreigners, and equally resolved to be independent of private establishments, the French Government resolved, and wisely resolved, in the interests of the nation, to create an establishment specially devoted to steam-boats.

Thus, in a time of war, the executive has the whole of the new steam establishment under control, is independent of extrinsic circumstances, can add to or diminish the number of workmen, and give to the whole establishment a unity, a rapidity, and a vigour, which would in vain be sought for in private establishments. The Isle of Indret, as I have before said, two leagues below Nantes, on the Loire, was the spot chosen by the Council of the Admiralty as the most fitting for this new *usine*. Three reasons determined this choice. Firstly, there had long existed at Indret a cannon-foundry for the use of the navy, which might be incorporated with the new establishment; secondly, the island offered a central situation in reference to Brest, L'Orient, and Rochefort; and lastly, the Loire afforded facilities for the transport of munitions of all sorts. M. Gengembre, a Paris engineer, was placed at the head of this establishment, and an agreement was entered into with him by the government, whereby it was stipulated that he should build this new steam arsenal, and continue to manage it for ten years, receiving three per cent on the value of the machines fabricated, so long as the amount should be under 1,000,000f., and two per cent on any sum above 1,000,000f. This treaty would have expired in

the month of May last year, but it was previously determined by the death of Gengembre, which took place in the month of January.

Now that this worthy man is no more in the land of the living, I may, without flattery, say, that he deserved well of his country, and that he honourably fulfilled the contract which he entered into with the French Government. I will not say, for it would be a misstatement, that there is any thing in the establishment which he directed at Indret, which can be compared with the commonest private slip on the banks of the Thames in England, there certainly is not; but when it is borne in mind that the whole process of steam navigation in France is scarcely more than thirteen years old, and therefore in its infancy, one is more surprised at the astonishing progress made in so short a time, than disposed to criticise an art yet undeveloped in this country. There is no man, however, who knows any thing of the rapid and dangerous vivacity of the French — who is aware of the disciplined skill, bravery, and, I may add, fierceness, which they throw into all their military and naval operations, who will not say, that the *usine* of Indret affords a wonderful proof of the celerity and promptitude with which this ingenious, though grossly misjudging, people can prepare themselves in almost an instant against any urgent emergency.

England has certainly, while I write, nothing to fear, from the *usine* of Indret, but this *usine* is but the type—the one grain of a numerous seed of establishments which will be sown all over France within the next twenty years; for Frenchmen of all ranks, classes, and conditions, are now well aware that it behoves them to create a school of steam engineers, machinists, and stokers for a species of navigation which is only budding into existence in their country.

You are well aware that there is scarcely a department of France which I have not twice travelled over during the last four months. I have been on all the rivers, as well as all the creeks and arms of the sea, on which there exists a steam navigation. Nay, further, I have traversed from sea to sea in French steamers, and in every instance, with a single exception, I found the engineers Englishmen. This fact, which may be attested on the Rhone, the Saone, the Gironde, and even on the canal of Languedoc, has sunk deep into the minds of Frenchmen; and they would have supplied the places of our countrymen, if they could have so managed, for two reasons: — first, because of the extra expenditure which the employment of English engineers occasions (each of them having from 3*l.* to 4*l.* a-week); and second, from a feeling of national pride. But, with no kindly dispositions

towards us, Frenchmen have hitherto found that they cannot conduct the smallest steam enterprise without the aid of an English engineer, and perhaps an English stoker to boot.

There have not been wanting stupid Joseph Humes, and periwig-pated, pence-filching, pinch-penny patriots, like Mr. Daniel O'Connell (unique, however, as

> "Poltron par mer
> Poltron par terre,
> Polisson partout,
> Gentilhomme nulle part");

—there have not been wanting, I say, in France such pitiful fellows as these to cry out against the utility, and to complain of the expense, of Indret; but the springtide of military and naval glory is so strong and overflowing in France, that these plebeian patriots have been silenced and cowed down, while in our common country the rhapsodies of the mendicant mountebank and the scrape-penny Scotch dunce are quoted in many newspapers and reviews as the "perfection of absolute wisdom." We may glorify ourselves on our superior sense, judgment, and discretion; but I nevertheless think we are far more disposed to patronise political quacks than this light-headed and vivacious nation. A corrupt and profligate politician, provided he be able and

witty, may draw around him in France troops of friends; but a sordid and shameless *nisi prius* beggar, such as O'Connell, or a stupid, save-penny Scotchman, such as Hume, would in a week be wasted away by the silent unutterable scorn, or the more withering ridicule, of a people who thoroughly understand Old Bailey love of country, and trading gainful patriotism. I must do French statesmen, and even the present Chamber of Deputies, the justice to say, that they did not yield to the parrot popular cry of "Abandon Indret, because it has cost much, and will cost still more;" on the contrary, men of all parties see and admit, that if the station were removed elsewhere, the expense must be more considerable. And among all the deputies —foolish, farcical, and Thrasonical as some of them are—there is not found one so unpatriotic, and so un-Gallic, as to say that these expenses, great though they be, are "baleful" to their country. The actual cost of the establishment at Indret, for the last ten years, has amounted to 1,454,433f. In comparing the machines made there with those finished at Paris, an incontestable superiority must be accorded to Indret. I am far from saying that the work turned out from this *usine* approaches perfection; for I know that two engines made for French post-

office steamers were very indifferent, and that there are no really superior engines in France but such as were made in England; but, when I take into account that the engines made here for the Dante and the Minos were manufactured in the greatest haste, and that the whole establishment is but in its infancy, I am more surprised at the progress made than disposed to criticise. The following is the amount of the prime cost of the machinery of six steamers manufactured at Indret:

	Francs.
The Styx	299,027
The Pharo	301,397
The Cerberus	322,346
The Dante	284,478
The Minos	284,478
The Cocytus	267,039

averaging a middle term of 293,128f. for each engine. It would, undoubtedly, be cheaper for the French Government to purchase this machinery in England, for the engine of the Sphynx alone cost 276,726f., and is a better article than any ever manufactured in France; but the French Government are not of the M'Culloch school of political economists, and are foolish enough to think that they are bound to encourage native industry, when they might have a cheaper and a better article abroad. If I were a French

statesman, I confess I would act on this principle, and find abundant motives for my decision in the encouragement thereby afforded to indigenous products and native artificers, and in the palpable advantage of having at home, on the banks of the Loire, in peace or war, instead of at Wapping or at Rotherhithe, a *usine*, and exercised and instructed workmen, capable of manufacturing engines necessary for the defence, perhaps for the safety, and certainly for the prosperity, of my country.

Attempts were made not long ago to have the *chantier de construction* at Indret suppressed and removed to Rochefort or L'Orient, but these efforts were wholly unsuccessful; for, independently of the advantage found in the proximity of the dock to the engine factory, and the prevention of oxydation, it has also been found that the material for ship-building is cheaper at Indret than either at Rochefort, Brest, or L'Orient, the *stere* of wood being 80f. 13c. at the former port, while the following are the prices in the three others:—

At L'Orient	88f. 81c.
At Brest	99f. 71c.
At Rochefort	101f. 47c.

Master smiths, metal turners, &c., receive in

this establishment about an average pay of 7f. 62c. a-day, and ordinary workmen and apprentices, 2f. 68c.

From the following observations addressed by the Baron Tupinier, in a report to the Minister of Marine, it will be seen what resources France hopes to find in Indret in time of war, a period which may be much nearer than many suppose:—

"Mais quand arrivera la guerre on s'estimera heureux le trouver sur ce point un établissement en pleine activité, dont il sera facile d'accroître les ressources autant qu'on le jugera nécessaire, et qui dispensera de detourner nos principaux arsenaux des grands travaux d'armément auxquels alors ils auront peine a suffire."

These are significant words, which should not be lost sight of at our Admiralty, and which should sink deep into the minds of the people of England. There is one point connected with this establishment in which we may with advantage take a lesson from our neighbours. There always remain during the night in the *usine* and dependent buildings a number of men sufficient to give prompt succour in case of fire. Had such a system been adopted at Plymouth and Sheerness, thousands of pounds might have been saved to our Government.

I now come to Bordeaux, on which I shall

make but a very few remarks. The navy of France has no very important establishments at Bordeaux, if I except the *ateliers des subsistances*, the dépôt of ship timber, and the *bureau des classes*. In the *ateliers des subsistances* a vast quantity of salted provisions is prepared. Bordeaux may, in this respect, be said to be the Cork of France. Within a few years special establishments have been formed for the preparation of fresh meat, vegetables, &c., according to a system invented by a M. Appert. These preparations are destined for the sick aboard king's ships, and are said to preserve their original freshness and succulence in any climate. I believe this process has not been resorted to by our Victualling-office, but it were well worthy of imitation.

Bordeaux was formerly renowned for its ship-builders. Some of the prettiest and fastest sailing frigates in France were formerly built here, but of late nothing has been launched in the department of the Gironde for the French navy. Although the port would not be a good station for steamers in war time, yet the largest ships can enter it, and the *bassin* is 600 toises in breadth. There are at least 100,000 domiciliated inhabitants in the town, to whom peace is not merely a blessing, but a want; but yet I regret to say that the journals of the place and the *salons* of society

resound with ribald abuse of English statesmen, English institutions, and English cupidity, as though the most mercenary, paltry, shopkeeping set of people on earth were not these very French. Buonaparte was grossly mistaken in saying the English were a nation of shopkeepers. The English are a nation of merchants—the French a populace of shopkeepers. That is the just and proper distinction.

Bayonne is, in the nautical sense, a far more important place than Bordeaux. It is a frontier town, and would be, commercially speaking, most prosperous, but for the shifting sand-bar at the mouth of the Adour, which is the greatest obstacle to the commercial prosperity of Bayonne. Under Louis IV., Ferré, director of the fortifications of Rochelle, and Touras, an engineer of great celebrity, laboured to remedy this defect, but unsuccessfully. In 1808, during Napoleon's long sojourn in the town, he caused the jetty to be lengthened, but the harbour still remains in a measure choked up. The French Government rents, at 2000 francs a-year, on the banks of the Adour, a very considerable plot of ground, in which magazines, workshops, and four slips, are built. During a period of twenty-five years' peace few vessels have been constructed here for the navy, but the French Admiralty is fully per-

suaded of the importance of the station in time of war, as an excellent station for steam-boats, more particularly in the event of offensive or defensive operations being commenced on the coasts of Biscay or any portion of the Spanish Peninsula.

In the present state of public affairs it may not be unimportant for you to know that the exterior of the fortifications of Bayonne is in a good state, but they would require an entire division to defend them. The inhabitants of the town amount to 20,000, but there are a number of Spanish refugees, whom I do not include among this number. There is a Commissary of the Marine resident here. The office was lately filled by M. le Baron de la Gatinerie, but he has been removed to Cherbourg within the last three months, carrying with him the regrets and good wishes of the respectable part of the population.

The 20th military division has its head-quarters at Bayonne. It is commanded by Count Harispe, of Basque extraction, holding the rank of Lieutenant-General in the service of France. The troops are in excellent order, and have within the last five months been perpetually exercised. Doubtless the English Consul, Mr. Harvey, an old Peninsular officer, and married to a Basque lady, has informed his government of all these particulars; but it is equally necessary that you and your readers should be acquainted with what

is actually going on, and that you should know how strong a prejudice — perhaps I should rather say hatred — exists towards the English name and nation. The French troops burn to cross the Bidassoa, in order to bring that wretched tool of the English, as they call Espartero, to reason.

THE END.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY MOYES AND BARCLAY, CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.